

# The SMART SET

Edited by  
George Jean Nathan  
and  
H.L. Mencken.



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# The SMART SET

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AND

HALF A HUNDRED BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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**SMART SET**  
*The*  
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## E Pluribus Unum

*By Lucy Jeanne Price*

M ADELAINE HARKAWAY SMITH insisted upon being a radical—an iconoclast—a martyr. She was determined to stand out against the great hordes of smug, satisfied, comfortable citizens and show that there was one woman in this fatly degenerating world who dared, who was willing to suffer ostracism—anything—for the things she believed and the things which would eventually redeem the race.

She had a vision of herself standing on a high hill, straight against the cold blue sky, tall and slim and heroic, and—of course—alone.

The fact that she was a bit too plump and rounded to stand quite so tall and straight and severe of silhouette happily did not occur to her.

Anyway she was bound to rebel. Against what? Against everything. For everything stood for what was Pharisaic and comfortable.

And so Madelaine Harkaway Smith deserted the ranks of her dancing friends, who, as she scornfully muttered to herself, were fiddling while Rome was burning.

She joined the Socialists. She didn't stop at the parlour kind. She delved into the heart of things and went to meetings in smoky halls and wore a red button.

It was a disappointment. There was not enough rebellion in it and too much economics. They talked of history, too, at the meetings. And what is history but the hypocritical record of a dead and selfish past?

Moreover she certainly did not seem to be standing alone. There were throngs of Socialists apparently. They appeared everywhere one went. Even in the respectable drawing-rooms one heard them accepted with no great demonstration of hostility.

That evidently could not be the



domain of Madelaine's martyrdom.

And so the woman rebel threw this bomb into a gathering of her Socialist friends, down in the mysterious and rebellious precincts of Washington Square:

"I am through with Socialism. It's all wrong. It's intended to keep a blind people contented. I will *not* be contented. I am an Anarchist."

Those present surveyed the bomb she had hurled at them as though it were a ball of knitting cotton.

"Madelaine, you're a theorist," was the nearest thing to a blazing torch that they applied. And she almost detected a yawn in the voice of him who thus persecuted her.

And so Madelaine became an Anarchist. She threw her head back one hitch farther and bobbed her hair and always wore clothes with pockets she could stick her hands into. She moved from the north of Washington Square to the south and tried to cultivate more rebellion and a touch of bitterness in the lines of her face. She went to the Liberal Club and smoked cigarettes while she was dancing, flicking the ashes over her partner's shoulder. She determined to show the world that there was still one woman who was willing to live her life for the sake of her beliefs and the salvation of her fellow-beings.

She asked defiant questions of the gentle Socialist speakers at Cooper Union meetings and she scorned all systems.

But still she did not seem to be alone. Everywhere there were all sorts of people who belonged to the group with her. Some of them even were fat. And one woman prominent in the anarchistic ranks wore a plaid silk waist with fluting down the center. Moreover, none of them seemed to realize that in being one at their assemblages, she was a martyr, a creature of heroic cast. They talked to her genially about the sloppiness of the winter this year, and did she have a good job. They were en-

thusiastic over teaching her new dance steps and they couldn't bear lukewarm coffee.

No one ever even pointed to Madelaine Harkaway Smith on the street except one time to tell her that her pocketbook was open.

She went in for birth control. She would show those people that there were no limits to her bravery—her audacity. And lo and behold, four hundred happy, respectable looking people turned out at the dinner of the birth controllers. Madelaine got a fair dinner out of it and that was about all.

She picketed with the strikers, and the employers' wives were there ahead of her doing the same thing.

She wrote a scathing poem denouncing Christianity and it was returned with a polite note saying that it had merit but was too much like seventeen others recently accepted by the editors.

Then she spoke from a soap box in Union Square, a defiant, rebellious speech in which she cried *à bas* to capital, law, society, labour unions, marriage, the church, war, peace, socialism, nature, cooked foods and every solution of human ills that had ever been suggested, and she decried and flaunted everyone who had ever offered these solutions.

And no one cried "Crucify her!"

They stopped, listened, moved on, smiled, ignored—gently and politely—and two of them came up afterward and said to her:

"That was a pretty good speech for an amateur. How would you like to give it up in our hall next Sunday afternoon? We have an organization of six hundred and eighty-three people who agree with everything you've just said. And we always have nice, jolly times together after the meetings. Want to come? There'll probably be dancing later on."

And poor Madelaine burst into tears and cried to the nearby taxi driver, "Take me home. You can't stand alone in a world with so many people in it!"





# Coming, Eden Bower!

(A Complete Novelette)

*By Willa Sibert Cather*

## CHAPTER I

DON HEDGER had lived for four years on the top floor of an old house on the south side of Washington Square, and nobody had ever disturbed him. He occupied one big room with no outside exposure except on the north, where he had built in a many-paned studio window that looked upon a court and upon the roofs and walls of other buildings.

His room was very cheerless, since he never got a ray of direct sunlight; the south corners were always in shadow. In one of these corners was a clothes closet, built against the partition; in another a wide divan, serving as a seat by day and a bed by night. In the front corner, the one farther from the window, was a sink, and a table with two gas burners, where he sometimes cooked his food. There, too, in the perpetual dusk, was the dog's bed, and often a bone or two for his comfort.

The dog was a Boston bull terrier, and Hedger explained his surly disposition by the fact that he had been bred to the point where it told on his nerves. His name was Cæsar III, and he had taken prizes at very exclusive dog shows. When he and his master went out to prowling about University Place or to promenade along West Street, Cæsar III was invariably fresh and shining. His pink skin showed through his mottled coat, which glistened as if it had just been rubbed with olive oil, and he wore a brass-studded

collar, bought at the smartest saddler's. Hedger, as often as not, was hunched up in an old striped blanket coat, with a shapeless felt hat pulled over his bushy hair, wearing black shoes that had become gray, or brown ones that had become black, and he never put on gloves unless the day was biting cold.

Early in May, Hedger learned that he was to have a new neighbour in the rear apartment—two rooms, one large and one small, that faced the west. His studio was shut off from the larger of these rooms by double doors which, though they were fairly tight, left him a good deal at the mercy of the occupant.

The rooms had been leased, long before he came there, by a trained nurse who considered herself knowing in old furniture. She went to auction sales and bought up mahogany and dirty brass and stored it away here, where she meant to live when she retired from nursing. Meanwhile, she sub-let her rooms, with their precious furniture, to young people who came to New York to write or to paint—who proposed to live by the sweat of the brow rather than of the hand, and who desired artistic surroundings. When Hedger first moved in, these rooms were occupied by a young man who tried to write plays, and who had kept on trying until a week ago, when the nurse had put him out for unpaid rent.

A few days after the playwright left, Hedger heard an ominous murmur of voices through the bolted double doors; the lady-like intonation of the nurse—



doubtless exhibiting her treasures—and another voice, also a woman's, but very different; young, fresh, unguarded, confident. All the same, it would be very annoying to have a woman in there. The only bath-room on the floor was at the top of the stairs in the front hall, and he would always be running into her as he came or went from his bath. He would have to be more careful to see that Cæsar didn't leave bones around the hall, too; and she might object when he cooked steak and onions on his gas burner.

As soon as the talking ceased and the woman left, he forgot them. He was absorbed in a picture of paradise fish at the Aquarium, staring out at people through the glass and green water of their tank. It was a highly gratifying idea; the incommunicability of one stratum of animal life with another—though Hedger pretended it was only an experiment in unusual lighting. When he heard trunks knocking against the sides of the narrow hall, then he realized that she was moving in at once.

Toward noon, groans and deep gasps and the creaking of ropes made him aware that a piano was arriving. After the tramp of the movers died away down the stairs, somebody touched off a few scales and chords on the instrument, and then there was peace. Presently he heard her lock her door and go down the hall humming something; going out to lunch, probably. He stuck his brushes in a can of turpentine and put on his hat, not stopping to wash his hands. Cæsar was smelling along the crack under the bolted doors; his bony tail stuck out hard as a hickory withe and the hair was standing up about his elegant collar.

Hedger encouraged him. "Come along, Cæsar. You'll soon get used to a new aroma."

In the hall stood an enormous trunk, behind the ladder that led to the roof, just opposite Hedger's door. The dog flew at it with a growl of hurt amazement. They went down three flights of stairs and out into the brilliant May afternoon.

Behind the Square, Hedger and his dog descended into a basement oyster house where there were no tablecloths on the tables and no handles on the coffee cups, and the floor was covered with sawdust, and Cæsar was always welcome—not that he needed any such precautionary flooring. All the carpets of Persia would have been safe for him. Hedger ordered steak and onions absent-mindedly, not realizing why he had an apprehension that this dish might be less readily at hand hereafter. While he ate, Cæsar sat beside his chair, gravely disturbing the sawdust with his tail.

After lunch, Hedger strolled about the Square for the dog's health and watched the stages pull out; that was almost the very last summer of the old horse stages on Fifth Avenue. The fountain had but lately begun operations for the season and was throwing up a mist of rainbow water which now and then blew south and sprayed a bunch of Italian babies who were being held up on the outer rim by older, very little older, brothers and sisters. Plump robins were hopping about on the soil; the grass was newly cut and blindingly green. Looking up the Avenue, through the Arch, one could see the young poplars with their fresh, bright, unsmoked leaves, and the Brevoort glistening in its spring coat of paint, and shining horses and carriages—occasionally an automobile, misshapen and sullen, like an ugly threat in a stream of things that were bright and beautiful and alive.

While Cæsar and his master were standing by the fountain, a girl approached them, crossing the Square. Hedger noticed her because she wore a lavender cloth suit and carried in her arms a big bunch of fresh lilacs. He saw that she was young and handsome—beautiful, in fact, with a splendid figure and good action. She, too, paused by the fountain and looked back through the Arch up the Avenue. She smiled rather patronizingly as she looked, and at the same time seemed delighted. Her slowly curving upper



lip and half-closed eyes seemed to say:

"You're gay, you're exciting, you are quite the right sort of thing; but you're none too fine for me!"

In the moment she tarried, Cæsar stealthily approached her and sniffed at the hem of her lavender skirt, then, when she went south like an arrow, he ran back to his master and lifted a face full of emotion and alarm, his lower lip twitching under his sharp white teeth and his hazel eyes pointed with a very definite discovery. He stood thus, motionless, while Hedger watched the lavender girl go up the steps and through the door of the house in which he lived.

"You're right, my boy, it's she! She might be worse looking, you know."

When they mounted to the studio, the new lodger's door at the back of the hall was a little ajar, and Hedger caught the warm perfume of lilacs just brought in out of the sun. He was used to the musty smell of the old hall carpet. (The nurse-lessee had once knocked at his studio door and complained that Cæsar must be somewhat responsible for the particular flavour of that mustiness, and Hedger had never spoken to her since). He was used to the old smell, and he preferred it to that of lilacs, and so did his companion, whose nose was so much more discriminating. Hedger shut his door vehemently, and fell to work.

Most young men who dwell in obscure studios in New York have had a beginning, come out of something, have somewhere a home town, a family, a paternal roof. But Don Hedger had no such background. He was a foundling, and had grown up in a school for homeless boys, where book-learning was a negligible part of the curriculum. When he was sixteen, a Catholic priest took him to Greensburg, Pennsylvania, to keep house for him. The priest did something to fill in the large gaps in the boy's education—taught him to like Don Quixote and *The Golden Legend*, and encouraged him to mess with paints and crayons in his room up under the slope of the mansard.

When Don wanted to go to New York to study at the Art League, the priest got him a night job as a packer in one of the big department stores. Since then, Hedger had taken care of himself; that was his only responsibility. He was singularly unencumbered; had no family duties, no social ties, no obligations toward anyone but his landlord. Since he travelled light, he had travelled rather far. He had got over a good deal of the earth's surface, in spite of the fact that he never in his life had more than three hundred dollars ahead at any one time, and he had already outlived a succession of convictions and revelations about his art.

Though he was now but twenty-six years old, he had twice been on the verge of becoming a marketable product; once through some studies of New York streets he did for a magazine, and once through a collection of pastels he brought home from New Mexico, which Remington, then a great man in American art, happened to see and generously tried to push. But on both occasions Hedger decided that this was something he didn't wish to carry further—simply the old thing over again and got nowhere—so he took enquiring dealers something in a "later manner," and they put him out of the shop. When he ran short of money he could always get any amount of commercial work because he was an expert draughtsman and worked with lightning speed. The rest of his time he spent in groping his way from one kind of painting into another, or travelling about without luggage, like a tramp, and he was chiefly occupied with getting rid of ideas he had once thought very fine.

Hedger's circumstances, since he had moved to Washington Square, were affluent compared to anything he had ever known before. He was now able to pay advance rent and turn the key on his studio when he went away for four months at a stretch. It didn't occur to him to wish to be richer than this. To be sure, he did without a great many things that other people think



necessary, but he didn't miss them because he had never had them. He belonged to no clubs, visited no houses, had no studio friends, and he ate his dinner alone in some decent little restaurant, even on Christmas and New Year's. For days together he talked to nobody but his dog and the janitress and the lame oysterman.

After he shut the door and settled down to his paradise fish on that first Tuesday in May, Hedger forgot all about his new neighbor. When the light failed, he took Cæsar out for a walk. On the way home he did his marketing on West Houston street, with a one-eyed Italian woman he knew. After he had cooked his beans and scallopini, and drunk half a bottle of Chianti, he put his dishes in the sink and went up on the roof to smoke. He was the only person in the house who ever went to the roof, and he had a secret understanding with the janitress about it. He was to have "the privilege of the roof" as she said, if he opened the heavy trapdoor on sunny days to air out the upper hall, and was watchful to close it when rain threatened. Mrs. Foley was fat and dirty and hated to climb stairs—besides, the roof was reached by a perpendicular iron ladder, definitely inaccessible to a woman of her bulk, and the iron door at the top of it was too heavy for any but Hedger's strong arm to lift. Hedger was not above medium height, but he practised with weights and dumbbells and in the shoulders he was as strong as a gorilla.

So Hedger had the roof to himself. He and Cæsar often slept up there on hot nights, rolled in blankets he had brought home from Arizona. He mounted with Cæsar under his left arm. The dog had never learned to climb a perpendicular ladder, and never did he feel so much his master's greatness and his own dependence upon him as when he crept under his arm for this perilous ascent. Up there was even gravel to scratch in, and a dog could do whatever he liked so long as he did not bark. It was a kind of Heaven,

which no one was strong enough to reach but his great, paint-smelling master.

On this blue May night there was a slender, girlish-looking young moon in the west, playing with a whole company of silver stars. Now and then one of them darted away from the group and shot off into the gauzy blue with a soft trail of light, like laughter. Hedger and his dog were delighted when a star did this. They were quite lost in watching the glittering game, when they were suddenly diverted by a sound—not from the stars, though it was music. It was not the prologue to "Pagliacci," which rose ever and anon on hot evenings from an Italian tenement on Thompson street, with the gasps of the corpulent baritone who got behind it; nor was it the hurdy-gurdy man, who often played at the corner in the balmy twilight. No, this was a woman's voice, singing the tempestuous, overlapping phrases of Signor Puccini, then comparatively new in the world, but already so popular that even Hedger recognized his unmistakable gusts of breath.

He looked about over the roofs; all was blue and still, with the well-built chimneys that were never used now standing up dark and mournful. He moved softly toward the yellow quadrangle where the gas from the hall shone up through the half-lifted trapdoor. Oh, yes! It came up through the hole like a strong draught, a big, beautiful voice, and it sounded rather like a professional's. A piano had come in the morning, Hedger remembered. This might be a very great nuisance. It would be pleasant enough to listen to if you could turn it on and off as you wished; but you couldn't. Cæsar, with the gas light shining up on his collar and his ugly but sensitive face, panted and looked up for information. Hedger put down a reassuring hand.

"I don't know. We can't tell yet. It may not be so bad."

He stayed on the roof until all was still below, and finally descended with



quite a new feeling about his neighbour. Her voice, like her figure, inspired respect—if one did not choose to call it admiration. Her door was shut, the transom was dark; nothing remained of her but the obtrusive trunk, unrightfully taking up room in the narrow hall.

## CHAPTER II

For two days Hedger didn't see her. He was painting eight hours a day just then, and only went out to hunt for food. He noticed that she practised scales and exercises for about an hour in the morning. Then she locked her door, went humming down the hall, and left him in peace. He heard her getting her coffee ready at about the same time he got his. Earlier still, she passed his room on her way to her bath. In the evening she sometimes sang, but on the whole she didn't bother him.

When he was working well he did not notice anything much. The morning paper lay before his door until he reached out for his milk bottle, then he kicked the sheet inside and it lay on the floor until evening. Sometimes he read it and sometimes he did not. He forgot there was anything of importance going on in the world outside of his third floor studio. Nobody had ever taught him that he ought to be interested in other people; in the Pittsburgh steel strike, in the Fresh Air Fund, in the scandal about the Babies' Hospital. A gray wolf, living in a Wyoming canyon, would hardly have been less concerned about these things than was Don Hedger.

One morning he was coming out of the bathroom at the front end of the hall, having just given Cæsar his bath and rubbed him into a glow with a heavy towel. Before the door, lying in wait for him as it were, stood a tall figure in a flowing blue silk dressing gown that fell away from her marble arms. In her hands she carried various accessories of the bath.

"I wish," she said distinctly, standing in his way, "I wish you wouldn't wash your dog in the tub. I never

heard of such a thing! I've found his hair in the tub, and I've smelled a doggy smell, and now I've caught you at it. It's an outrage!"

Hedger was badly frightened. She was so tall and positive, and was fairly blazing with beauty and anger. He stood blinking, holding onto his sponge and dog-soap, feeling that he ought to bow very low to her. But what he actually said was:

"Nobody has ever objected before. I always wash the tub—and, anyhow, he's cleaner than most people."

"Cleaner than me?" her eyebrows went up, her white arms and neck and her fragrant person seemed to scream at him like a band of outraged nymphs. Something flashed through his mind about a man who was turned into a dog, or was pursued by dogs, because he unwittingly intruded upon the bath of beauty.

"No, I didn't mean that," he muttered, turning scarlet under the bluish stubble of his muscular jaws. "But I know he's cleaner than I am."

"That I don't doubt!" Her voice sounded like a shaft shivering of crystal, and with a smile of pity she drew the folds of her voluminous blue robe against the wall and allowed the wretched man to pass. Even Cæsar was frightened; he darted like a streak down the hall, through the door and to his own bed in the corner among the bones.

Hedger stood still in the doorway, listening to indignant sniffs and coughs and a great swishing of water about the sides of the tub. He had washed it; but as he had washed it with Cæsar's sponge, it was quite possible that a few bristles remained; the dog was shedding now. The playwright had never objected, nor had the jovial illustrator who occupied the front apartment—but he, as he admitted, "was usually pie-eyed, when he wasn't in Buffalo." He went home to Buffalo sometimes to rest his nerves.

It had never occurred to Hedger that anyone would mind using the tub after Cæsar—but then, he had never seen a



beautiful girl caparisoned for the bath before. As soon as he beheld her standing there, he realized the unfitness of it. For that matter, she ought not to step into a tub that any other mortal had bathed in; the illustrator was sloppy and left cigarette ends on the moulding.

All morning as he worked he was gnawed by a spiteful desire to get back at her. It rankled that he had been so vanquished by her disdain. When he heard her locking her door to go out for lunch, he stepped quickly into the hall in his messy painting coat, and addressed her.

"I don't wish to be exigent, Miss"—he had certain grand words that he used upon occasion—"but if this is your trunk, it's rather in the way here."

"Oh, very well!" she exclaimed carelessly, dropping her keys into her handbag. "I'll have it moved when I can get a man to do it," and she went down the hall with her free, roving stride.

Her name, Hedger discovered from her letters, which the postman left on the table in the lower hall, was Eden Bower.

### CHAPTER III

IN the closet that was built against the partition separating his room from Miss Bower's, Hedger kept all his wearing apparel, some of it on hooks and hangers, some of it on the floor. When he opened his closet door nowadays, little dust-coloured insects flew out on downy wing, and he suspected that a brood of moths were hatching in his winter overcoat. Mrs. Foley, the janitress, told him to bring down all his heavy clothes and she would give them a beating and hang them in the court. The closet was in such disorder that he shunned the encounter, but one hot afternoon he set himself to the task.

First he threw out a pile of forgotten laundry and tied it up in a sheet. The bundle stood as high as his middle when he had knotted the corners. Then he got his shoes and overshoes to-

gether. When he took his overcoat from its place against the partition, a long ray of yellow light shot across the dark enclosure, a knothole, evidently, in the high wainscoting of the west room. He had never noticed it before and without realizing what he was doing, he stooped and squinted through it.

Yonder, in a pool of sunlight, stood his new neighbour, clad in a pink chiffon cloud of some sort, doing gymnastic exercises before a long gilt mirror. Hedger did not think how unpardonable it was of him to watch her. A woman in negligée was not an improper object to a man who had worked so much from unclad models, and he continued to look simply because, except in old sculpture, he had never seen a human body so beautiful as this one—positively glorious in action. As she swung her arms and changed from one pivot of motion to another, muscular energy seemed to flow through her from her toes to her finger-tips. The soft flush of exercise and the gold of the afternoon sun played over her together, enveloped her in a luminous mist which, as she turned and twisted, made now an arm, now a shoulder, dissolve in pure light and instantly recover its outline with the next gesture.

Hedger's fingers curved as if he were holding a crayon; mentally he was doing the whole figure in a single running line, and the charcoal seemed to explode in his hand at the point where the energy of each gesture was discharged into the whirling disc of light.

He could not have told whether he watched her for six minutes or sixteen. When her gymnastics were over, she paused to catch up a lock of hair that had come down; then, with her hand on her hip, she walked unconcernedly across the room and disappeared through the door into her bedchamber.

Disappeared—Don Hedger was staring at the golden shower which poured in through the west windows, at the lake of gold on the faded Turkish carpet. The spot seemed enchanted; as if a vision out of Alexandria, out of the



remote pagan past, had bathed itself there in Helianthine fire.

When he crawled out of his closet he stood blinking at the gray sheet stuffed with laundry. He felt a little sick as he contemplated the bundle. Everything here was different; he hated the disorder of the place, the gray prison light, his old shoes and himself and all his slovenly habits. The black calico curtains that ran on wires over his big window were white with dust. There were three frying pans in the sink, and the sink itself—. He felt desperate. He couldn't stand this another minute. He took up an armful of winter clothes and ran down four flights into the basement.

"Mrs. Foley," he began, "I want my room cleaned this afternoon, thoroughly cleaned. Can you get a woman for me right away?"

"Is it company you're having?" the fat, dirty janitress inquired.

Mrs. Foley was the widow of a useful Tammany man, and she owned real estate in Flatbush. She was huge and soft as a featherbed. Her face and arms were permanently coated with dust, grained like wood where the perspiration had trickled.

"Yes, company. That's it."

"Well, this is a queer time of the day to be asking for a cleaning woman. It's likely I can get you old Lizzie, if she's not drunk. I'll send Willy round to see."

Willy, the son of fourteen, roused from the stupour and stain of his third box of cigarettes by the gleam of a quarter, went out. In five minutes he returned with old Lizzie—she smelling strong of spirits and wearing several jackets which she had put on one over the other, and a number of skirts, long and short, which made her resemble an animated dish-clout.

She had, of course, to borrow her equipment from Mrs. Foley, and toiled up the long flights, dragging mop and pail and broom. She told Hedger to be of good cheer, for he had got the right woman for the job, and showed him a great leather strap she wore about her

wrist to prevent dislocation of tendons. She swished about the place, scattering dust and splashing soapsuds, while he watched her in nervous despair. He stood over Lizzie and made her scour the sink, directing her roughly, then paid her and got rid of her. Shutting the door on his failure, he hurried off with his dog to lose himself among the stevedores and dock labourers on West Street.

A strange chapter began for Don Hedger. Day after day, at that hour in the afternoon, the hour before his neighbor dressed for dinner, he crouched in his closet to watch her go through with her mysterious exercises. It did not occur to him that his conduct was detestable; there was nothing shy or retreating about this girl—and these gymnastics had clearly a public purpose, were a part of her preparation for the stage.

Hedger scarcely regarded his action as conduct at all; it was something that had happened to him. More than once he went out and tried to stay away for the whole afternoon, but at about five o'clock he was sure to find himself among his old shoes in the dark. The pull of that aperture was stronger than his will—and he had always considered his will the strongest thing about him. When she threw herself upon the divan and lay resting, he still stared, holding his breath. His nerves were so on edge that a sudden noise made him start. The dog would come and tug at his sleeve, knowing that something was wrong with his master. If he attempted a mournful whine, those strong hands closed about his throat.

When Hedger came out of his closet, he sat down on the edge of the couch, sat for hours without moving. He was not painting at all now. This thing, whatever it was, drank him up as ideas had sometimes done, and he sank into a stupour of idleness as deep and dark as the stupour of work. He could not understand it; he was no boy, he had worked from models for years, and the beauty of women had disturbed him little more than any other form of



beauty. Yet now his brain held but one image—vibrated, burned with it.

Women had come and gone in Hedger's life. Not having had a mother to begin with, his relations with them, whether amorous or friendly, had been casual. He got on well with janitresses and wash-women, with Indians and with the peasant women of foreign countries. He had friends among the shirtwaist factory girls who came to eat their lunch in Washington Square, and he sometimes took a model for a day into the country. He felt an unreasoning antipathy toward the well-dressed women he saw coming out of big shops, or driving in the Park. If, on his way to the Art Museum, he noticed a pretty girl standing on the steps of one of the houses in upper Fifth Avenue, he frowned at her and went by with his shoulders hunched up as if he were cold. He had never known such girls, or heard them talk, or seen the inside of the houses in which they lived; but he believed them all to be artificial and, in an aesthetic sense, perverted. He saw them enslaved by desire of merchandise and manufactured articles, effective only in making life complicated and insincere and in embroidering it with ugly and meaningless trivialities. They were enough, he thought, to make one almost forget woman as she existed in art, in thought and in the universe.

He had no desire to know the woman who had, for the time at least, so broken up his life, no curiosity about her every-day personality. He shunned any revelation of it, and he listened for Miss Bower's coming and going not to encounter but to avoid her. He wished that the girl who wore shirtwaists and got letters from Chicago would keep out of his way, that she did not exist. With her he had nought to make. But in a room full of sun, before an old mirror, on a little enchanted rug of sleeping colours, he had seen a woman emerge and give herself up to the primitive poetry of motion. And for him she had no geographical associations; unless with Crete, or Alexandria,

or Veronese's Venice. She was the immortal conception, the perennial theme.

The first break in Hedger's lethargy occurred one afternoon when two young men came to take Eden Bower out to dine. They went into her music room, laughed and talked for a few minutes, and then took her away with them. They were gone a long while, but he did not go out for food himself; he waited for them to come back. At last he heard them coming down the hall, gayer and more talkative than when they left. One of them sat down at the piano, and they all began to sing. This Hedger found absolutely unendurable. He snatched up his hat and went running down the stairs. Cæsar leaped beside him, hoping that old times were coming back.

They had supper in the oysterman's basement and then sat down in front of their own doorway. The moon stood full over the Square, a thing of regal glory; but Hedger did not see the moon; he was looking, murderously, for men. Presently two, wearing straw hats and white trousers and carrying canes, came down the steps from his house. He rose and dogged them across the Square. They were laughing and seemed very much elated about something. As one stopped to light a cigarette, Hedger caught from the other:

"Don't you think she has a beautiful talent?"

His companion threw away his match. "She has a beautiful figure." They both ran to catch the stage.

Hedger went back to his studio. The light was shining from her transom. For the first time he violated her privacy at night and looked through that fatal aperture. She was sitting, fully dressed, in the window, smoking a cigarette and looking out over the housetops. He watched her until she rose, looked about her with a disdainful, crafty smile, and turned out the light.

The next morning, when Miss Bower went out, Hedger followed her. Her



white skirt gleamed ahead of him as she sauntered about the Square. She sat down behind the Garibaldi statue and opened a music book she carried. She turned the leaves carelessly, and several times glanced in his direction. He was on the point of going over to her when she rose quickly and looked up at the sky. A flock of pigeons had risen from somewhere in the crowded Italian quarter to the south, and were wheeling rapidly up through the morning air, soaring and dropping, scattering and coming together, now gray, now white as silver, as they caught or intercepted the sunlight. She put up her hand to shade her eyes and followed them with a kind of defiant delight in her face.

Hedger came and stood beside her. "You've surely seen them before?"

"Oh, yes," she replied, still looking up. "I see them every day from my windows. They always come home about five o'clock. Where do they live?"

"I don't know. Probably some Italian raises them for the market. They were here long before I came, and I've been here four years."

"In that same gloomy room? Why didn't you take mine when it was vacant?"

"It isn't gloomy. That's the best light for painting."

"Oh, is it? I don't know anything about painting. I'd like to see your pictures some time. You have such a lot in there. Don't they get dusty, piled up against the wall like that?"

"Not very. I'd be glad to show them to you. Is your name really Eden Bower? I've seen your letters on the table."

"Well, it's the name I'm going to sing under. My father's name is Bowers, but my friend, Mr. Jones, a Chicago newspaper man who writes about music, told me to drop the 's.' He's crazy about my voice."

Miss Bower didn't usually tell the whole story—about anything. Her first name, when she lived in Huntington, Ill., was Edna, but Mr. Jones had

persuaded her to change it to one which he felt would be worthy of her future. She was quick to take suggestions, though she told him she "didn't see what was the matter with Edna."

She explained to Hedger that she was going to Paris to study. She was waiting in New York for Chicago friends who were to take her over, but who had been detained.

"Did you study in Paris?" she asked.

"No, I've never been in Paris. But I was in the south of France all last summer, studying with C—. He's the biggest man among the moderns—at least I think so."

Miss Bower sat down and made room for him on the bench. "Do tell me about it. I expected to be there by this time, and I can't wait to find out what it's like."

Hedger began to relate how he had seen some of this Frenchman's work in an exhibition, and deciding at once that this was the man with whom he wanted to study, he had taken a boat for Marseilles the next week, going over steerage. He proceeded at once to the little town on the coast where his painter lived, and presented himself. The man never took pupils, but because Hedger had come so far he let him stay. Hedger lived at the master's house and every day they went out together to paint, sometimes on the blazing rocks down by the sea. They wrapped themselves in light woolen blankets and didn't feel the heat. Being there and working with C— was being in paradise, Hedger concluded; he learned more in three months than in all his life before.

Eden Bower laughed.

"You're a funny fellow. Didn't you do anything but work? Are the women very beautiful? Did you have awfully good things to eat and drink?"

Hedger said some of the women were fine looking, especially one girl who went about selling fish and lobsters. About the food there was nothing remarkable—except the ripe figs, he liked those. They drank sour wine,



and used goat-butter, which was very strong.

"But don't they have parties or banquets? Aren't there any fine hotels down there?"

"Yes, but they are all closed in summer and the country people are poor. It's a beautiful country, though."

"How beautiful?" she persisted.

"If you want to go in, I'll show you some sketches and you'll see."

Miss Bower rose. "All right. I won't go to my fencing lesson this morning. Do you fence? Here comes your dog. You can't move but he's after you. He always makes a face at me when I meet him in the hall, and shows his nasty little teeth as if he wanted to bite me."

In the studio Hedger got out his sketches, but to Miss Bower, whose favourite pictures were "Christ Before Pilate" and a red-haired Magdalen of Henner, these landscapes were not at all beautiful, and they gave her no idea of any country whatsoever. She was careful not to commit herself, however. Her vocal teacher had already convinced her that she had a great deal to learn about many things.

"Why don't we go out to lunch somewhere?" Hedger asked, and began to dust his fingers with a handkerchief which he got out of sight as swiftly as possible.

"All right, the Brevoort," she said carelessly. "I think that's a good place and they have good wine. I don't care for cocktails."

Hedger felt his chin uneasily. "I'm afraid I haven't shaved this morning. If you could wait for me in the Square? It won't take me ten minutes."

Left alone, he found a clean collar and handkerchief, brushed his coat and blacked his shoes, and last of all dug up ten dollars from the bottom of an old copper kettle he had brought from Spain. His winter hat was of such a complexion that the Brevoort hall boy winked at the porter as he took it and placed it on the rack in a row of fresh straw ones.

## CHAPTER IV

THAT afternoon Eden Bower was lying on the couch in her music room, her face turned to the window, watching the pigeons. Reclining thus, she could see none of the neighbouring roofs, only the sky itself and the birds that crossed and re-crossed her field of vision, white as scraps of paper blowing in the wind. She was thinking that she was young and handsome and had had a good luncheon, that a very easy-going, light-hearted city lay in the streets below her; and she was wondering why she found this queer painter chap, with his lean, bluish cheeks and heavy black eyebrows, more interesting than the smart young men she met at her teacher's studio.

Eden Bower was, at twenty, very much the same person that we all know her to be at forty, except that she knew a great deal less. But one thing she knew; that she was to be Eden Bower. She was like someone standing before a great show window full of beautiful and costly things, deciding which she will order. She understands that they will not all be delivered immediately, but one by one they will arrive at her door. She already knew some of the many things that were to happen to her; for instance, that the Chicago millionaire who was going to take her abroad with his sister as chaperon, would eventually press his claim in quite another manner. He was the most circumspect of bachelors, afraid of everything obvious, even of women who were too flagrantly handsome. He was a nervous collector of pictures and furniture, a nervous patron of music, and a nervous host; very cautious about his health and about any course of conduct that might make him ridiculous. But she knew that he would at last throw all his precautions to the winds.

People like Eden Bower are inexplicable. Her father sold farming machinery in Huntington, Ill., and she had grown up in that prairie town with no acquaintances or experiences outside



of it. Yet from her earliest childhood she had not one conviction or opinion in common with the people about her—the only people she knew.

Before she was out of short dresses she had made up her mind that she was going to be an actress, that she would live far away in great cities, that she would be much admired by men and would have everything she wanted. When she was thirteen, and was already singing and reciting for church entertainments, she read in some illustrated magazine a long article about the late Czar of Russia, then just come to the throne or about to come to it. After that, lying in the hammock on the front porch on summer evenings, or sitting through a long sermon in the family pew, she amused herself by trying to make up her mind whether she would or would not be the Czar's mistress when she played in his capital.

Now, Edna had met this fascinating word only in the novels of Ouida—her hard-worked little mother kept a long row of them in the upstairs storeroom, behind the linen chest. In Huntington, women who bore that relation to men were called by a very different name, and their lot was not an enviable one; of all the shabby and poor, they were the shabbiest. But then, Edna had never lived in Huntington; not even before she began to find books like "Sappho" and "Mademoiselle de Maupin," secretly sold in paper covers throughout Illinois. It was as if she had come into Huntington, into the Bowers family, on one of the trains that puffed over the marshes behind their back fence all day long, and was waiting for another train to take her out.

As she grew older and handsomer, she had many beaux, but these small-town boys didn't interest her. If a lad kissed her when he brought her home from a dance, she was indulgent and she rather liked it. But if he pressed her further, she slipped away from him, laughing. After she began to sing in Chicago, she was consistently discreet. She stayed as a guest in rich

people's houses, and she knew that she was being watched like a rabbit in a laboratory. Covered up in bed, with the lights out, she thought her own thoughts, and laughed.

This summer in New York was her first taste of freedom. The Chicago capitalist, after all his arrangements were made for sailing, had been compelled to go to Mexico to look after oil interests. His sister knew an excellent singing master in New York. Why should not a discreet, well-balanced girl like Miss Bower spend the summer there, studying quietly? The capitalist suggested that his sister might enjoy a summer on Long Island; he would rent the Griffiths place for her, with all the servants, and Eden could stay there. But his sister met this proposal with a cold stare.

So it fell out that between selfishness and greed, Eden got a summer all her own—which really did a great deal toward making her an artist and whatever else she was afterward to become. She had time to look about, to watch without being watched; to select diamonds in one window and furs in another, to select shoulders and mustaches in the big hotels where she went to lunch. She had the easy freedom of obscurity and the consciousness of power. She enjoyed both. She was in no hurry.

While Eden Bower watched the pigeons, Don Hedger sat on the other side of the bolted doors, looking into a pool of dark turpentine at his idle brushes, wondering why a woman could do this to him. He, too, was sure of his future and knew that he was a chosen man. He could not know, of course, that he was merely the first to fall under a fascination which was to be disastrous to a few men and pleasantly stimulating to many thousands. Each of these two young people sensed the future, but not completely. Don Hedger knew that nothing much would ever happen to him. Eden Bower understood that to her a great deal would happen. But she did not guess that her neighbour would have



more tempestuous adventures sitting in his dark studio than she would find in all the capitals of Europe, or in all the latitude of conduct she was prepared to permit herself.

## CHAPTER V

ONE Sunday morning Eden was crossing the Square with a spruce young man in a white flannel suit and a Panama hat. They had been breakfasting at the Brevoort and he was coaxing her to let him come up to her rooms and sing for an hour.

"No, I've got to write letters. You must run along now. I see a friend of mine over there, and I must ask him about something before I go up."

"That fellow with the dog? Where did you pick him up?" The young man glanced toward the seat under a sycamore where Hedger was reading the morning paper.

"Oh, he's an old friend from the West," said Eden easily. "I won't introduce you because he doesn't like people. He's a recluse. Good-by. I can't be sure about Tuesday. I'll go with you if I have time after my lesson."

She nodded, left him and went over to the seat littered with newspapers. The young man went up the Avenue without looking back.

"Well, what are you going to do today? Shampoo this animal all morning?" Eden inquired teasingly.

He made room for her on the seat. "No, at twelve o'clock I'm going out to Coney Island. One of my models, a fine girl, is going up in a balloon this afternoon. I've often promised to go and see her, and now I'm going."

Eden asked if models usually did such stunts. No, Hedger told her, but Molly Welch added to her earnings in that way.

"I believe," he added, "she likes the excitement of it. She's got a good deal of spirit. That's why I like to paint her. So many models have flaccid bodies."

"And she hasn't, eh? Is she the one

who comes to see you? I can't help hearing her, she talks so loud."

"Yes, she has a rough voice, but she's a fine girl. I don't suppose you'd be interested in going?"

"I don't know," Eden sat tracing patterns on the asphalt with the end of her parasol. "Is it any fun? I got up feeling I'd like to do something different today. It's the first Sunday I've not had to sing in church. I had that engagement for breakfast at the Brevoort, but it wasn't very exciting. That chap can't talk about anything but himself."

Hedger warmed a little. "If you've never been to Coney Island, you ought to go. It's nice to see all the people; tailors and bartenders and prize-fighters with their best girls, and all sorts of folks taking a holiday."

Eden looked sidewise at him. So one ought to be interested in people of that kind, ought one? He was certainly a funny fellow. Yet he was never, somehow, tiresome. She had seen a good deal of him lately, but she kept wanting to know him better, to find out what made him different from men like the one she had just left—whether he really was as different as he seemed.

"I'll go with you," she said at last, "if you'll leave that at home."

She pointed to Cæsar's flickering ears with her sunshade.

"But he's half the fun. You'd like to hear him bark at the waves when they come in."

"No, I wouldn't. He's jealous and disagreeable if he sees you talking to anyone else. Look at him now."

"Of course, if you make a face at him. He knows what that means and he makes a worse face. He likes Molly Welch, and she'll be disappointed if I don't bring him."

Eden said decidedly that he couldn't take both of them. So at twelve o'clock when she and Hedger got on the boat at Desbrosses street, Cæsar was lying on his pallet with a bone.

Eden enjoyed the boat ride. It was the first time she had been on the water and she felt as if she were embarking



for France. The light, warm breeze and the plunge of the waves made her feel wide awake, and she liked crowds of any kind. They went to the balcony of a big, noisy restaurant and had a shore dinner with tall steins of beer. Hedger had got a big advance from his advertising firm since he first lunched with Miss Bower ten days ago, and he was ready for anything.

After dinner they went to the tent behind the bathing beach, where the tops of two balloons bulged out over the canvas. A red-faced man in a linen suit stood in front of the tent, shouting in a hoarse voice and telling the people that if the crowd was good for five dollars more a beautiful young woman would risk her life for their entertainment. Four little boys in dirty red uniforms ran about taking contributions in their pill-box hats. One of the balloons was bobbing up and down in its tether and people were shoving one another to get nearer the tent.

"Is it dangerous, as he says?" Eden asked.

"Molly says it's simple enough if nothing goes wrong with the balloon. Then it would be all up, I suppose."

"Wouldn't you like to go up with her?"

"I? Of course not. I'm not fond of taking foolish risks."

Eden sniffed. "I shouldn't think sensible risks would be very much fun."

Hedger did not answer, for just then everyone began to shove the other way and shout, "Look out. There she goes!" And a band of six pieces began playing furiously.

As the balloon rose from its tent enclosure, they saw a girl in green tights standing in the basket, holding carelessly to one of the ropes with one hand and with the other waving to the spectators. A long rope trailed behind to keep the balloon from blowing out to sea.

As it soared, the figure in green tights in the basket diminished to a mere spot, and the balloon itself, in the brilliant light, looked like a big silver-gray bat, with its wings folded. When

it began to sink, the girl stepped through the hole in the basket to a trapeze that hung below, and gracefully descended through the air, holding to the rod with both hands, keeping her body taut and her feet close together. The crowd—it had grown very large by this time—cheered vociferously. The men took off their hats and waved, little boys shouted, and fat old women, shining with the heat and a beer lunch, murmured admiring comments upon the balloonist's figure.

"Beautiful legs, she has!"

"That's so," Hedger whispered. "Not many girls would look well in that position."

Then, for some reason, he blushed a slow, dark, painful crimson.

The balloon descended slowly, a little way from the tent, and the red-faced man in the linen suit caught Molly Welch before her feet touched the ground and pulled her to one side. The band struck up "Blue Bell" by way of welcome, and one of the sweaty pages ran forward and presented the balloonist with a large bouquet of artificial flowers. She smiled and thanked him, and ran back across the sand to the tent.

"Can't we go inside and see her?" Eden asked. "You can explain to the door man. I want to meet her."

Edging forward, she herself addressed the man in the linen suit and slipped something from her purse into his hand.

They found Molly seated before a trunk that had a mirror in the lid and a "make-up" outfit spread upon the tray. She was wiping the cold cream and powder from her neck with a discarded chemise.

"Hello, Don," she said cordially. "Brought a friend?"

Eden liked her. She had an easy, friendly manner, and there was something boyish and devil-may-care about her.

"Yes, it's fun. I'm mad about it," she said in reply to Eden's questions. "I always want to let go, when I come down on the bar. You don't feel your



weight at all, as you would on a stationary trapeze."

The big drum boomed outside, and the publicity man began shouting to newly arrived boat-loads. Miss Welch took a last pull at her cigarette. "Now you'll have to get out, Don. I change for the next act. This time I go up in a black evening dress, and lose the skirt in the basket before I start down."

"Yes, go along," said Eden. "Wait for me outside the door. I'll stay and help her dress."

Hedger waited and waited, while women of every build bumped into him and begged his pardon, and the red pages ran about holding out their caps for coins, and the people ate and perspired and shifted parasols against the sun. When the band began to play a two-step all the bathers ran up out of the surf to watch the ascent. The second balloon bumped and rose, and the crowd began shouting to the girl in a black evening dress who stood leaning against the ropes and smiling.

"It's a new girl," they called. "It ain't the Countess this time. You're a peach, girlie!"

The balloonist acknowledged these compliments, bowing and looking down over the sea of upturned faces, but Hedger was determined she should not see him, and he darted behind the tent-fly. He was suddenly dripping with cold sweat, his mouth was full of the bitter taste of anger, and his tongue felt stiff behind his set teeth. Molly Welch, in a shirt-waist and a white tam-o'-shanter cap, slipped out from the tent under his arm and laughed up in his face. "She's a crazy one, you brought along. She'll get what she wants!"

"Oh, I'll settle with you, all right!" Hedger brought out with difficulty.

"It's not my fault, Donnie. I couldn't do anything with her. She bought me off. What's the matter with you? Are you soft on her? She's safe enough. It's as easy as rolling off a log, if you keep cool." Molly Welch was rather excited herself, and she was chewing gum at a high speed as she stood beside

him, looking up at the floating silver cone.

"Now watch," she exclaimed suddenly. "She's coming down on the bar. I advised her to cut that out, but you see she does it first rate. And she got rid of the skirt, too. I don't think those black tights show off her legs very well, she's got fine legs. But she keeps her feet together like I told her, and makes a good line along the back. See the light on those silver slippers—that was a good idea of mine. Come along to meet her. Don't be a grouch; she's done it fine!"

Molly tweaked his elbow, and then left him standing like a stump while she ran down the beach with the crowd, which was flowing over the sand like a thick liquid and gazing upward at the slowly falling silver star.

Though Hedger was sulking, his eye could not help seeing the low blue welter of the sea, the arrested bathers, standing in the surf, their arms and legs stained red by the dropping sun, shading their eyes and looking shoreward while the great bird settled down.

Molly Welch and the red-faced man caught Eden under the arms and lifted her aside, a red page dashed up with a bouquet, and the band struck up "Blue Bell." Eden laughed and bowed, took Molly's arm and ran up the sand in her black tights and silver slippers, dodging the friendly old women and the gallant sports who wanted to offer their homage on the spot.

When she emerged from the tent, dressed in her own clothes, that part of the beach was almost deserted. She stepped to her companion's side and said, carelessly, "Hadn't we better try to catch this boat? I hope you're not sore at me. Really, it was lots of fun."

Hedger looked at his watch.

"Yes, we have fifteen minutes to get to the boat," he said politely.

As they walked toward the pier, one of the red-imp pages ran up panting.

"Lady, you're carrying off the bouquet," he said aggrievedly.

Eden stopped and looked at the bunch



of spotty cotton roses in her hand. "Of course. I want them for a souvenir. You gave them to me yourself."

"I give 'em to you for looks, but you can't take 'em away. They belong to the show."

"Oh, you always use the same bunch?"

"Sure we do. There ain't too much money in this business."

She laughed and tossed them back to him.

"Why are you angry?" she asked Hedger. "I wouldn't have done it if I'd been with some fellows, but I thought you were the sort who wouldn't mind. Molly didn't for a minute think you would."

"What possessed you to do such a fool thing?" he asked roughly.

"I don't know. When I saw Molly coming down, I wanted to try it. It looked exciting. Didn't I hold myself as well as she did?"

Hedger shrugged his shoulders, but in his heart he instantly forgave her.

The return boat was not crowded, though the boats that passed them, going out, were packed to the rails. The sun was setting. Boys and girls sat on the long benches with their arms about each other, singing.

Eden felt a strong wish to propitiate her companion, to be alone with him. She had been curiously wrought up by her balloon trip; it was a lark, but not very satisfying unless one came back to something after the flight. She wanted to be admired and adored.

Though Eden said nothing, and sat with her arms limp on the rail in front of her, looking languidly at the rising silhouette of the city and the bright path of the sun, Hedger felt a strange drawing near to her. If he but brushed her white skirt with his knee, there was an instant communication between them, such as there had never been before. They did not talk at all, but when they went over the gang-plank she took his arm and kept her shoulder close to him. He felt as if they were enveloped in a highly charged atmosphere, an invisible

network of subtle, almost painful sensibility. They had somehow taken hold of each other.

An hour later, they were dining in the back garden of a little French hotel on Ninth street, long since passed away. It was cool and leafy there, and the mosquitoes were not very numerous. A party of South Americans at another table were drinking champagne, and Eden murmured that she thought she would like some, if it were not too expensive. "Perhaps it will make me think I am in the balloon again. That was a very nice feeling. You've forgiven me, haven't you?"

Hedger gave her a quick straight look from under his black eyebrows, and something went over her that was like a chill, except that it was warm and feathery. She drank most of the wine; her companion was indifferent to it. He was talking more to her tonight than he had ever done before. She asked him about a new picture she had seen in his room, a queer thing full of stiff, supplicating female figures. "It's Indian, isn't it?"

"Yes. I call it Rain Spirits, or maybe, Indian Rain. In the Southwest, where I've been a good deal, the Indian traditions make women have to do with the rainfall. They were supposed to control it, somehow, and to be able to find springs and make moisture come out of the earth. You see I'm trying to learn to paint what people think and feel; to get away from all that photographic stuff. When I look at you, I don't see what a camera would see, do I?"

"How can I tell?"

"Well, if I should paint you, I could make you understand what I see." For the second time that day Hedger crimsoned unexpectedly, and his eyes fell and steadily contemplated a dish of little radishes. "That particular picture I got from a story a Mexican priest told me; he said he found it in an old manuscript book in a monastery down there, written by some Spanish missionary. He got his stories from the Aztecs. This one he called 'The



Forty Lovers of the Queen,' and it was more or less about rain-making."

"Aren't you going to tell it to me?" Eden asked.

Hedger fumbled among the radishes. "I don't know if it's the proper kind of story."

Eden smiled; "Oh, forget about that! I've been balloon riding today. I like to hear you talk."

Her low voice was flattering. She had seemed like clay in his hands ever since they got on the boat to come home. He leaned back in his chair, forgot his food and, looking at her intently, began to tell his story, the theme of which he somehow felt was dangerous to-night.

The tale began, he said, somewhere in Ancient Mexico, and concerned the daughter of a king. The birth of this Princess was preceded by unusual portents. Three times her mother dreamed that she was delivered of serpents, which betokened that the child she was to bear would have power with the rain gods. The serpent was the symbol of water. The Princess grew up dedicated to the gods, and wise men taught her the rain-making mysteries. She was guarded from men at all times, for it was the law of Thunder that she be so until her marriage. In the years of her adolescence, rain was abundant with her people. The oldest man could not remember such fertility.

When the Princess had counted eighteen years, her father went to drive out a war party that harried his borders on the north and troubled his prosperity. The King destroyed the invaders and brought home many prisoners. Among the prisoners was a young chief, taller than any of his captors, of such strength and ferocity that the King's people came a day's journey to look at him. When the Princess beheld his great stature, and saw that his arms and breast were covered with the figures of wild animals, bitten into the skin and coloured, she begged his life from her father. She desired that he should practise his art upon her, and prick upon her skin the signs of Rain

and Lightning and Thunder, and stain the wounds with herb-juices, as they were upon his own body. For many days, upon the roof of the King's house, the Princess submitted herself to the bone needle, and the women with her marvelled at her fortitude.

But the Princess was without shame before the Captive, and it came about that he threw from him his needles and his stains, and embraced the Princess; and her women ran down from the roof screaming, to call the guard which stood at the gateway of the King's house, and none stayed to protect their mistress. When the guard came, the Captive was thrown into bonds, and he was maimed, and his tongue was torn out and he was given for a slave to the Rain Princess.

The country of the Aztecs to the east was tormented by thirst, and their king, hearing much of the rain-making arts of the Princess, sent an embassy to her father, with presents and an offer of marriage. So the Princess went from her father to be the Queen of the Aztecs, and she took with her the Captive, who served her in everything with entire fidelity and slept upon a mat before her door.

The King gave his bride a fortress on the outskirts of the city, whither she retired to entreat the rain gods. This fortress was called the Queen's House, and on the night of the new moon the Queen came to it from the palace. But when the moon waxed and grew toward the round, then the Queen returned to the King. The drought abated in the country and rain fell abundantly by reason of the Queen's power with the stars.

When the Queen went to her own house she took with her no servant but the Captive, and he slept outside her door and brought her food after she had fasted. The Queen had a jewel of great value, a turquoise that had fallen from the sun, and had the image of the sun upon it. And when she admired a young man whom she had seen in the army or among the slaves, she sent the Captive to him with the jewel, for a



sign that he should come to her at the Queen's House upon business concerning the welfare of all. And some, after she had talked with them, she sent away with rewards; and some she took in and kept them by her for one day or two.

Afterward she called the Captive and bade him conduct the youth by the secret way he had come, underneath the chambers of the fortress. But for the going away of the Queen's visitors the Captive took out the bar that was beneath a stone in the floor of the passage and put in its stead a rush-reed, and the youth stepped upon it and fell through into a cavern that was the bed of an underground river, and whatever was thrown into it was not seen again. In this service and in all others the Captive did not fail the Queen.

But when the Queen sent for the Captain of the Archers, she detained him four days, and on the fourth day she went to the Captive outside her door and said: Tomorrow take this man up by the sure way, by which the King comes, and let him live.

In the Queen's door were arrows, purple and white. When she desired the King to come to her publicly, with his guard, she sent him a white arrow, but when she sent the purple, he came secretly and covered himself with his mantle to be hidden from the stone gods at the gate. When the Queen thus detained the Captain of the Archers, and moreover purposed to let him live, the Captive took a purple arrow to the King, and the King came secretly and found them together. He killed the Captain with his own hand, but the Queen he brought to public trial. The Captive, when he was put to the question, told on his fingers forty men that he had let through the underground passage into the river. The Captive and the Queen were put to death by fire, both on the same day, and afterward there was scarcity of rain.

\* \* \*

Eden Bower sat shivering a little while she listened. Hedger was not

trying to please her, she thought, but to antagonize and frighten her by his fantastic story. She had often told herself that his lean, big-boned lower jaw was like his bulldog's, but tonight his face made Cæsar's most savage and determined expression seem an affectation. Now she was looking at the man he really was. Nobody's eyes had ever defied her like this. They were searching her and seeing everything: all she had concealed from Livingston, and from the millionaire and his friends, and from the newspaper men. He was testing her, trying her out, and she was more ill at ease than she wished to show.

"That's quite a thrilling story," she said at last, rising and winding her scarf about her throat. "It must be getting late. Almost everyone has gone."

They walked down the Avenue like people who have quarrelled, or who wish to get rid of each other. Hedger did not take her arm at the street crossings and they did not linger in the Square. At her door he tried none of the old devices of the Livingston boys. He stood like a post, having forgotten to take off his hat, gave her a harsh, threatening glance, muttered "good-night," and shut his own door noisily.

There was no question of sleep for Eden Bower. Her brain was working like a machine that would never stop. After she undressed she tried to calm her nerves by smoking a cigarette, lying on the divan by the open window. But she grew wider and wider awake, combating the challenge that had flamed all evening in the strange man's eyes. The balloon had been one kind of excitement, the wine another; but the thing that had roused her, as a blow rouses a proud man, was the doubt, the contempt, the sneering hostility with which this violent man had looked at her when he told his savage story. Crowds and balloons were all very well, she reflected, but woman's chief adventure is man. With a mind over-active and a sense of life over-strong, she wanted to walk across the roofs in the



starlight; to sail over the sea and face at once a world of which she had never been afraid.

Hedger must be asleep; his dog had stopped sniffing under the double doors. Eden put on her wrapper and slippers and stole softly down the hall over the old carpet; one loose board creaked just as she reached the ladder. The trap-door was open, as always on hot nights. When she stepped out on the roof she drew a long breath and walked across it, looking up at the stars. Her foot touched something soft; she heard a low growl, and on the instant Caesar's sharp little teeth caught her ankle and waited. His breath was like steam on her leg. Nobody had ever intruded upon his roof before, and he panted for the movement or the word that would let him spring his jaw. Instead, the hand that held it closed on his throat, as Hedger reached out from his blankets.

"Wait a minute. I'll settle with him," he said grimly.

He dragged the dog toward the man-hole and disappeared. When he came back he found Eden standing over by the dark chimney, looking away in an offended attitude.

"I caned him unmercifully," he panted. "Of course, you didn't hear anything; he never whines when I beat him. He didn't nip you, did he?"

"I don't know whether he broke the skin or not," she answered aggrievedly, still looking off into the west.

"If I were one of your friends in white trousers, I'd strike a match to find whether you were hurt, though I know you are not, and then I'd see your ankle, wouldn't I?"

"I suppose so."

He shook his head and stood with his hands in the pockets of his old painting jacket. "I'm not up to such boy-tricks. If you want the place to yourself, I'll clear out. But if you stay here and I stay here—" he shrugged his shoulders.

Eden did not stir, and she made no reply. Her head drooped slightly, as if she were considering. But the mo-

ment he put his arms about her they began to talk, both at once, as people do in an opera. The instant avowal of each brought out a flood of trivial admissions. Hedger confessed his crime, was reproached and forgiven, and now Eden knew what it was in his look that she had found so disturbing of late.

Standing against the black chimney, with the sky behind and blue shadows before, they looked like one of Hedger's own paintings of that period; two figures, one white and one dark, and nothing whatever distinguishable about them but that they were male and female. The faces were lost, the contours blurred in shadow, but the figures were a man and a woman, and that was their whole concern and their mysterious beauty—it was the rhythm in which they moved, at last, along the roof and down into the house. She came down very slowly. The excitement and bravado and uncertainty of that long day and night seemed all at once to tell upon her. When his feet were on the carpet and he reached up to lift her down, she twined her arms about his neck as after a long separation, and turned her face to him, and her lips, with their perfume of youth.

## CHAPTER VI

IN time they quarrelled, of course, and about an abstraction—as young people often do, as mature people almost never do. Eden came in late one afternoon. She had been with some of her musical friends to lunch at Burton Ives' studio, and she began telling Hedger about that beautiful place. He listened a moment and then threw down his brushes.

"I know exactly what it's like," he said impatiently. "A very good department store conception of a studio. It's one of the show places."

"Well, it's a gorgeous place, and he said I could bring you to see him. The boys tell me he's awfully kind about giving people a lift, and you might get something out of it."

Hedger started up and pushed his



canvas out of the way. "What could I possibly get from Burton Ives? He's almost the worst painter in the world; the stupidest, I mean."

Eden was annoyed. Burton Ives had been very nice to her and had begged her to sit for him.

"You must admit that he's a very successful one," she said coldly.

"Of course he is. Anybody can be successful who will do that sort of thing. I wouldn't paint his pictures for all the money in New York."

"Well, I saw a lot of them, and I think they are beautiful."

Hedger bowed stiffly.

"What's the use of being a great painter if nobody knows about you?" Eden went on persuasively. "Why don't you paint the kind of pictures people can understand, and then, after you're successful, do whatever you like."

"As I look at it," said Hedger brusquely, "I am successful."

Eden looked about the dark hole. "Well, I don't see any evidences of it," she said, biting her lip. "He has a Japanese servant and a wine cellar and keeps a riding horse."

Hedger melted a little. "My dear, I have the most expensive luxury in the world, and I am much more extravagant than Burton Ives, for I work to please nobody but myself."

"You mean you could make money and don't? That you don't try to get a public?"

"Exactly. A public only wants what has been done over and over. I'm painting for painters—who haven't been born."

"What would you do if I brought Mr. Ives down here to see your things?"

"Well, for God's sake, don't! Before he left I'd probably tell him what I thought of him."

Eden rose. "I give you up. You know very well there's only one kind of success that's real."

"Yes, but it's not the kind you mean. So you've been thinking me a scrub painter, who needs a helping hand from

some fashionable studio man? What the devil have you had anything to do with me for, then?"

"There's no use talking to you," said Eden, walking slowly toward the door. "I've been trying to pull wires for you all afternoon, and this is what it comes to."

She had expected that the tidings of a prospective call from the great man would be received very differently, and had been thinking as she came home in the stage how, as with a magic wand, she might gild Hedger's future, float him out of his dark hole on a tide of prosperity, see his name in the papers and his pictures in the windows on Fifth Avenue.

Hedger mechanically snapped the midsummer leash on Cæsar's collar and they ran downstairs and hurried through Sullivan street off toward the river. He wanted to be among rough, honest people, to get down where the big drays bumped over stone paving blocks, and the men wore corduroy trousers and kept their shirts open at the neck. He stopped for a drink in one of the sagging bar-rooms on the water front. He had never in his life been so deeply wounded; he did not know he could be so hurt. He had told this girl all his secrets. On the roof, in these warm, heavy summer nights, with her hands locked in his, he had been able to explain all his misty ideas about an unborn art the world was waiting for; had been able to explain them better than he had ever done to himself. And she had looked away to the chattels of this uptown studio and coveted them for him! To her he was only an unsuccessful Burton Ives.

Then why, as he had put it to her, did she take up with him? Young, beautiful, talented as she was, why had she wasted herself on a scrub? Pity? Hardly; she wasn't sentimental. There was no explaining her. But in this passion that had seemed so fearless and so fated-to-be, his own position now looked to him ridiculous. Hedger ground his teeth so loud that his dog,



trotting beside him, heard him and looked up.

While they were having supper at the oysterman's, Hedger planned his escape. Whenever he saw her again, everything he had told her, that he should never have told anyone, would come back to him; ideas that he had never whispered even to the painter whom he worshipped and had gone all the way to France to see. To her they must seem his apology for not having horses and a valet, or merely the puerile boastfulness of a weak man. He would catch the train out to Long Beach tonight, and tomorrow he would go on to the north end of Long Island, where an old friend of his had a summer studio among the sand dunes, and he would stay until things came right in his mind. And she could find a smart painter, or take her punishment.

When he went home, Eden's room was dark; she was dining out somewhere. He threw his things into a hold-all he had carried all about the world with him, strapped up some colours and canvases, and ran downstairs.

## CHAPTER VII

FIVE days later Hedger was a restless passenger on a dirty, crowded Sunday train, coming back to town. Of course he saw now how unreasonable he had been in expecting a Huntington girl to know anything about pictures; here was a whole continent full of people who knew nothing about pictures and he didn't hold it against them. What had such things to do with him and Eden Bower? When he lay out on the dunes, watching the moon come up out of the sea, it had seemed to him that there was no wonder in the world like the wonder of Eden Bower. He was going back to her because she was older than art, because she was the most overwhelming thing that had ever come into his life.

He had written her yesterday, begging her to be at home this evening, telling her that he was contrite, and wretched enough.

Now that he was on his way to her, his stronger feeling unaccountably changed to a mood that was playful and tender. He wanted to share everything with her, even the most trivial things. We wanted to tell her about the people on the train, coming back tired from their holiday with bunches of wilted flowers and dirty daisies; to tell her that the fish-man, to whom she had often sent him for lobsters, was among the passengers, disguised in a silk shirt and a spotted tie, and how his wife looked exactly like a fish, even to her eyes.

He could tell her, too, that he hadn't even unstrapped his canvases—that ought to convince her.

In those days passengers from Long Island came into New York by ferry. Hedger had to be quick about getting his dog out of the express car in order to catch the first boat. The East River, and the bridges, and the city to the west, were burning in the conflagration of the sunset; there was that great home-coming reach of evening in the air.

The car changes from Thirty-fourth street were too many and too perplexing; for the first time in his life Hedger took a hansom cab for Washington Square. Cæsar sat bolt-upright on the worn leather cushion beside him, and they jogged off, looking down on the rest of the world.

It was twilight when they drove down lower Fifth Avenue into the Square, and through the Arch behind them were the two long rows of pale violet lights that used to bloom so beautifully against the gray stone and asphalt. Here and yonder about the Square hung globes that shed a radiance not unlike the blue mists of evening, emerging softly when daylight died, as the stars emerged in the thin blue sky. Under them the sharp shadows of the trees fell on the cracked asphalt and the sleeping grass. The first stars and the first lights were growing silver against the gradual darkening, when Hedger paid his driver and went into the house—which,



thank God, was still there! On the hall table lay his letter of yesterday, unopened.

He went upstairs with every sort of fear and every sort of hope clutching at his heart; it was as if tigers were tearing him. Why was there no gas burning in the top hall? He found matches and the gas bracket. He knocked, but got no answer; nobody was there. Before his own door were exactly five bottles of milk, standing in a row. The milk-boy had taken spiteful pleasure in thus reminding him that he forgot to stop his order.

Hedger went down to the basement; it, too, was dark. The janitress was taking her evening airing on the basement steps. She sat waving a palm-leaf fan majestically, her dirty calico dress open at the neck. She told him at once that there had been "changes." Miss Bower's room was to let again, and the piano would go tomorrow. Yes, she left on Saturday, she sailed for Europe with friends from Chicago. They arrived on Friday, heralded by many telegrams. Very rich people they were said to be, though the man had refused to pay the nurse a month's rent in lieu of notice—which would have been only right, as the young lady had agreed to take the rooms until October.

Mrs. Foley had observed, too, that he didn't overpay her or Willy for their trouble, and a great deal of trouble they had been put to, certainly. Yes, the young lady was very pleasant, but the nurse said there were rings on the mahogany table where she had put tumblers and wine glasses. It was just as well she was gone. The Chicago man was uppish in his ways, but not much to look at. She supposed he had poor health, for there was nothing to him inside his clothes.

Hedger went slowly up the stairs—never had they seemed so long, or his legs so heavy. The upper floor was emptiness and silence. He unlocked his room, lit the gas and opened the windows. When he went to put his coat in the closet, he found, hanging among his clothes, a pale, flesh-tinted

dressing gown he had liked to see her wear, with a perfume—oh, a perfume that was still Eden Bower! He shut the door behind him and there, in the dark, for a moment he lost his manliness. It was when he held this garment to him that he found a letter in the pocket.

The note was written with a lead pencil, in haste: She was sorry that he was angry, but she still didn't know just what she had done. She had thought Mr. Ives would be useful to him; she guessed he was too proud. She wanted awfully to see him again, but Fate came knocking at her door after he had left her. She believed in Fate. She would never forget him and she knew he would become the greatest painter in the world. Now she must pack. She hoped he wouldn't mind her leaving the dressing gown; somehow, she could never wear it again.

After Hedger read this, standing under the gas, he went back into the closet and knelt down before the wall; the knot hole had been plugged up with a ball of wet paper—the same blue notepaper on which her letter was written.

He was hard hit. Tonight he had to bear the loneliness of a whole lifetime. Knowing himself so well, he could hardly believe that such a thing had ever happened to him; that such a woman had lain happy and contented in his arms. And now it was over. He turned out the light and sat down on his painter's stool before the big window. Cæsar, on the floor beside him, rested his head on his master's knee. We must leave Hedger thus, sitting in solitude with his dog, looking up at the stars.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *Coming, Eden Bower!*

This legend, in electric lights over the Manhattan Opera House, for weeks announced her return to New York, after years of spectacular success in Paris. She came at last, under the management of an American Opera



Company, but bringing her own *chef d'orchestre*.

One bright December afternoon Eden Bower was going down Fifth Avenue in her car, on the way to her broker in William street. Her thoughts were entirely upon stocks—Cerro de Pasco, and how much she should buy of it—when she suddenly looked up and realized that she was skirting Washington Square. She had not seen the place since she rolled out of it in an old-fashioned four-wheeler to seek her fortune, eighteen years ago.

"*Arretez, Alphonse. Attendez-moi,*" she called, and opened the door before he could reach it. The children who were streaking over the asphalt on roller skates saw a lady in a long fur coat and short, high-heeled shoes alight from a French car and pace slowly about the Square, holding her muff to her chin. This spot, at least, had changed very little, she reflected; the same trees, the same fountain, the white arch, and over yonder Garibaldi, drawing the sword for freedom. There, just opposite her, was the old red brick house.

"Yes, that is the place," she was thinking. "I can smell the carpets now, and that dog—what was his name? That grubby bathroom at the end of the hall, and that dreadful Hedger—Still, there was something about him, you know—"

She glanced up and blinked against the sun. From somewhere in the crowded quarter south of the Square a flock of pigeons rose, wheeling quickly upward into the brilliant blue sky. She threw back her head, pressed her muff closer to her chin, and watched them with a smile of amazement and delight. So they still rose, out of all that dirt and noise and squalour, fleet and silvery, just as they used to rise that summer when she was twenty and went up in a balloon on Coney Island!

Alphonse opened the door and tucked her robes about her. All the way down town her mind wandered from Cerro de Pasco, and she kept smiling and looking up at the sky.

When she had finished her business with the broker, she asked him to look in the telephone book for the address of M. Gaston Jules, the picture dealer, and slipped the paper on which he wrote it into her glove. It was five o'clock when she reached the French Galleries, as they were called. On entering, she gave the attendant her card, asking him to take it to M. Jules. The dealer appeared very promptly and begged her to come into his private office, where he pushed a great chair toward his desk for her and signalled his secretary to leave the room.

"How good your lighting is in here," she observed, glancing about. "I met you at Simon's studio, didn't I? Oh, no! I never forget anybody who interests me." She threw her muff on his writing table and sank into the deep chair. "I have come to you for some information that's not in my line. Do you know anything about an American painter named Hedger?"

He took the seat opposite her. "Don Hedger? But, certainly! There are some very interesting things of his in an exhibition at V—'s. If you would care to—"

She held up her hand. "No, no. I've no time to go to exhibitions. Is he a man of any importance?"

"Certainly. He is one of the first men among the moderns. That is to say, among the very moderns. He is always coming up with something different. He often exhibits in Paris, you must have seen—"

"No, I tell you I don't go to exhibitions. Has he had great success? That is what I want to know."

M. Jules pulled at his short gray mustache. "But, Madame, there are many kinds of success," he began cautiously.

Madame gave a dry laugh. "Yes, so he used to say. We once quarrelled on that issue. And how would you define his particular kind?"

M. Jules grew thoughtful. "He is a great name with all the young men, and he is decidedly an influence in art. But one can't definitely place a man



who is original, erratic, and who is changing all the time."

She cut him short. "Is he much talked about at home? In Paris, I mean? Thanks. That's all I want to know." She rose and began buttoning her coat. "One doesn't like to have been an utter fool, even at twenty."

"*Mais, non!*" M. Jules handed her her muff with a quick, sympathetic glance. He followed her out through the carpeted showroom, now closed to the public and draped in cheesecloth, and put her into her car with words

appreciative of the honour she had done him in calling.

Leaning back in the cushions, Eden Bower closed her eyes, and her face, as the street lamps flashed their ugly orange light upon it, became hard and settled, like a plaster cast; so a sail, that has been filled by a strong breeze, behaves when the wind suddenly dies. Tomorrow night the wind would blow again, and this mask would be the golden face of Clytemnestra. But a "big" career takes its toll, even with the best of luck.

(The End)



## August Noon

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

LIKE fairy ships at anchor  
On streams of daytime sleep,  
Are all the water lilies  
Where weary waters creep.

Like maidens whose gay lovers  
Have had a change of mind,  
Are all the drooping willows  
Yearning for the Wind.

Even a thrush sits silent  
Where reeds begin to die . . .  
A hawk seems caged, uncaring,  
In one hot bit of sky.

Oh, what has gone from Summer  
Here where I walk alone?  
Something that goes from loving  
When all of Love is known!





# Life is Full of Romance

*By Edward Arthur Beder*

I CAME upon her as I turned the corner. A sweet, gracious little figure nestling close by the side entrance of a big department store. Daintily aloof from the eager crowd that passed her by was she, unconscious of all those hurrying footsteps, all unconcerned as to their varied destinations, seeing only the little blue envelope she held in her hand. Somehow the scent of Romance came to me as I beheld her, standing so still and so sweetly engrossed in her mis-sive.

The brisk throngs that have their being in the lunch hour of a great city made of her a piquant, arresting figure. Not hard to guess what that little blue

envelope contained. Not hard to guess of its love whispers set to paper and of the tremulous dreams, delicate as a flute's trills, stirring so finely in her.

Love had touched this child, singling her out from the myriads, making of her a torchbearer to light up a sordid world with its magic.

It warmed my heart to see how she lingered over the little envelope, gazing so raptly at it, making no motion to break the seal. It enchanted me! Ah, little blue envelope filled with Love!

I drew nearer—I crept close. She was studying the directions for mixing a seidnitz powder.



UNDER twenty a girl blushes; between twenty and thirty she tries hard to look indignant; after thirty she gives three cheers.



MEN are no longer driven to drink by women. If they know the right kind of women they are led to it.



THE test of friendship is in the welcome; the test of love is in the farewell.





# Home-Made

By Ford Douglas

## I

THE club was as dry as a powder horn. The lockers in the "library" were gone, and on the long bar back in the taproom stood only a dismal row of fly-specked pop bottles. For when the guillotine fell on the never-to-be-forgotten sixteenth day of January president August P. Dumbeck instituted a policy of *Schrecklichkeit*. Under his orders and his eye a squad of waiters and bell-hops searched the premises from cellar to roof, confiscating all the stray pints and half-pints that were cunningly hidden here and there behind pictures and under radiators, or buried in the upholstery of the furniture. In one short week the devastation was complete; the place as arid as the Mojave Desert.

The silence of a morgue prevailed. There was nothing to do now but sit and read about the League of Nations, or about the silk shirt movement among the proletariat, or about the soaring cost of alimony, or to look at the corset and lingerie ads, or to exchange low-voiced reminiscences of the golden days that were no more.

It was late in the afternoon, the drowsy hour preceding dinner, and a dozen or more men lay sprawled in the big leather chairs, some of them softly snoring. Near the window old Judge Hawper occupied his usual seat. He was a portly man and his chair, after twenty years of hard use, had become flattened into a shapeless mass of dingy leather of about the size and general topography of a buf-

falo wallow. Judge Hawper regarded this mound of hair-stuffed hide as his very own. It symbolized his vine and fig-tree, he being a bachelor, and he would sit nowhere else, nor would he permit its use by even his closest friends. In the last stages of decrepitude, the house committee had for years tried to dispossess him of the disreputable-looking relic, but the Judge fought for it tooth and claw; moreover, he would permit no repairs, change of position, or tampering whatsoever. He had what might be called a squatter's title in the chair, and held it tenaciously against all comers.

"Sisst! Sisst!"

Twice the sharp, sibilant hiss fell on Judge Hawper's ears, stirring him out of his doze. It irritated him, and opening his eyes he frowned at a red-faced gentleman who was standing in the doorway. The stranger, it was plain at a glance, was from the provinces. His clothes spoke eloquently of the fact; in his hatband was a ticket that the train conductor had forgotten to remove. The hissing gentleman was laden with a pair of bulging suitcases, which he held firmly in his possession, notwithstanding the efforts of a swarm of bellboys to relieve him. Now, to Judge Hawper's astonishment, the man looked full at him as he again made the waiter-summoning noise.

"Sir, are you addressing me?" demanded the Judge, with a slight walrus-like roll in his chair preliminary to rising. "Are you sizzing at me, sir?"



The stranger shot a significant look at the suitcases.

"I got it, Judge," he said in a rasping whisper. "Come on!"

A combined rocking and rolling motion was effectual in freeing Judge Hawper from his wallow, and scrambling to his feet he approached the man who was now grinning expectantly. A closer vision, for the Judge was a trifle near-sighted, resulted in his recognition of the stranger as Mr. Edward Dumont, a non-resident member from somewhere in the agricultural district.

A great light broke over Judge Hawper, an illumination in which the two bulging suitcases largely contributed. He remembered, now, that Dumont had on a previous occasion confided in him a great secret, and, better still, had promised to bring some of the stuff on his next trip to the city.

"My dear Mr. Dumont," he boomed, his face widening in a delighted smile. "How very fortunate! I was just about to write you that I have those legal matters in shape now for your consideration. We must have a private conference at once."

He offered his hand to Mr. Dumont, who, after a moment's hesitation, put down a suitcase, and which on contact with the floor emitted a crash resembling that of a collision of a street car with a brewery wagon.

Instantly a small, wiry built man leaped from his chair and approached the pair hurriedly. "Quick! Up to my room," he said. "There's a lot of old buzzards sitting around here and they wouldn't leave you a drop."

Doc Clark was a weazel of a man. But what he lacked in size he made up in energy. He had a brisk, authoritative way about him, and, much as a farmer's wife would shoo a couple of fat hens into a coop, Clark hustled the two men down the hall and into the elevator.

"By George, it's lucky for you that I happened to be around!" he said.

Old Dumbeck is on the warpath these days."

The sudden onslaught took Judge Hawper off his guard, and he could only look at Mr. Dumont in dismay.

"Dr. Clark," he said, at last, "I want to introduce you to Mr. Dumont, one of our non-resident members."

"Oh, I have known Mr. Bowmont for a long time," said the Doctor, smiling warmly. "Indeed we are close friends."

"The name is Dumont, not Bowmont," said that individual, speaking for the first time.

"Quite true, quite true," agreed Clark pleasantly. "For the moment I had the name confused with Bowmont—General Alonzo K. Bowmont, a gallant soldier and a distinguished gentleman, sir, whom you resemble very much."

He picked up Dumont's suitcases, and directing the elevator man to stop at the fifth floor, stepped out, bidding his unwilling guests to follow. A few moments later and they were in Clark's room and he was ordering glasses and a pitcher of cracked ice over the telephone. This done, he loosened the straps on Dumont's luggage, telling them to make themselves perfectly at home.

## II

THE allusion to Mr. Dumont's resemblance to a gallant though altogether fictitious general had not been without effect, and that gentleman became impressed at once that Dr. Clark was a man of the keenest discernment.

Clark had some difficulty with the various catches on the luggage, but the case was finally opened, exposing to their gaze a vast number of cans and bottles of every imaginable kind and size.

"Great God!" he ejaculated, falling back in dismay. "Somebody has switched suitcases on you."

This was but a stratagem, Mr. Du-



mont told them,—a ruse to baffle the hounds of the law in case of search. And it was for this reason that the original labels on the containers had been left intact. He had prepared an elaborate alibi in case of arrest, he said, his rôle to be that of an itinerant junk-man.

While examining the highly interesting display the ice and glasses arrived—as did also Mr. William Duncan and Mr. Charles Lee. These worthies having followed the bellboy into the room at once gave a display of histrionic talent of a high order. In quick succession they registered surprise, dismay and embarrassment—emotions to which they were strangers. Their intrusion was no accident, as Doc Clark well knew. Duncan had organized the servants into a smoothly working spy system and heavy subsidies kept him in close touch with those that “had it.”

“Excuse us, Doc,” he stammered. “We never dreamed you were giving a party. I offer you our most abject apology. Of course, under the circumstances, we can not accept an invitation to join you gentlemen and we must go. Good night!”

“Good night,” returned the Doctor coldly. “Don’t slam the door.”

But Charley Lee was on the job. Shrewdly guessing as to the ownership of the suitcase, he had already introduced himself to Mr. Dumont and with all the guile of a professional bunco steerer had insinuated himself into that gentleman’s good graces and was even now considering Mr. Dumont’s pressing invitation. He hesitated, exhibited a reluctance that had no foundation in fact, offering one excuse after another, and so thoroughly alarming Mr. Duncan, who had conveniently forgotten his leave-taking and was making himself useful in arranging the glasses, that he gave his confederate several warning kicks on the shins.

Dr. Clark listened disgustedly.

“Oh, shut up!” he said. “And

close that door and lock it, or we’ll have the whole club up here.”

From the score or more of bottles and cans Mr. Dumont selected a quart preserving jar for the purpose of demonstration. A heavy metal cap was screwed on the mouth of the jar, and on its side was a label that proclaimed to all the world that its content was strawberry jam.

“This, gentlemen, is something I made myself—‘home-made,’ I call it—and it’s about the slickest stuff that ever wet a gullet. Now, gentlemen,” he continued, holding the bottle to the light, “I want you to see the colour of this article.”

Judge Hawper adjusted his glasses and put his face close to the clear, yellowish liquid.

“Splendid!” he said. “It looks like a very fine quality of Chartreuse. I congratulate you, sir.”

“And,” said Mr. Dumont proudly, “I want you to see the bead.”

He shook the fruit jar energetically—whereat there was a loud explosion, the jar vanished, and Mr. Dumont was staring blankly at a thin wisp of glass which he held between his thumb and forefinger. Judge Hawper was drenched. A yellowish liquid dripped from his nose, and a hissing mass of yellow foam flowed slowly down his shirt-front and under his waistcoat. With a mad-dened cry he extracted the metal top from under his collar, where it had been blown by the force of the explosion, and threw it angrily to the floor.

“What in hell do you mean?” he demanded. “You deliberately hit me with that bottle, sir, and I shall prosecute you, sir, for attempted murder.”

He took off his glasses and placed them on the table. Then he folded his arms before the astonished Mr. Dumont and intimated that if that gentleman had designs of assassination that he could proceed then and there; *but*, he charged Dumont, any



such attempt would be met with both courage and vigor.

While hurling this defiance at the dumfounded Dumont the Judge from time to time placed his hand to his neck, after which he would glance with nervous anxiety at his fingers. There was no trace of blood, which rather vexed him, for if the truth be told Hawper was already picturing himself as a martyr. Alarmed, Doc Clark made a hurried examination of his neck.

"Shucks, you're not even scratched!" he said.

The martyr was visibly disappointed. Indeed, he seemed angrier than ever, and if it had not been for Mr. Lee and Mr. Duncan, the evening's pleasure might have been abruptly ended. Moreover, the non-resident member was beginning now to show some belated signs of resentment and might at any moment depart and, worse, take his clinking luggage with him. It was a delicate situation. With towels the other three men groomed the dripping Judge like a racehorse, and between swipes they honeyed him back into good humor. No sooner had that moment arrived than Mr. Duncan, assuming the rôle of host, opened a bottle labeled "Dunkhouser's Pure Grated Horseradish," and the glasses were poured.

"Ah!" breathed Doc Clark, after a preliminary sip, "Delicious!"

Mr. Duncan and Mr. Lee became at once extravagant in their praise. They were past-masters in the art and soon the amateur vintner's ruffled feelings were soothed and he was drifting very agreeably in a rosy sea of adulation.

The Judge's nostrils began to twitch. The smell of the "home-made" filled the room, and with his first sniff the last vestige of his resentment vanished, and he reached eagerly for the tumbler that Duncan handed him.

"I should say it is a happy blend of a light Moselle and a dry Bur-

gundy," he said after a prodigious gulp. He drained the glass in another loud swallow and held the empty tumbler under his nose. "The bouquet is enchanting—reminiscent—tantalizingly so, and I can't quite place it." He returned the vessel to Duncan who, in the interest of further investigation, promptly replenished it.

Mr. Dumont's happiness was complete. His companions were connoisseurs of repute, and their praise made him proud indeed.

In rapid succession three more bottles were opened: a small half-pint labeled "Worlick's Cod Liver Oil," a larger receptacle marked "Spirits of Turpentine," and a four-ounce vial that had once contained a doctor's prescription, decorated with a red sticker—"Poison—For External Use Only." The dull, dreary days were left behind; conversation became brilliant and, perhaps, a trifle louder.

### III

AN interesting phenomenon now manifested itself in Mr. Lee. Without warning or gradual evolution he became the possessor of a dialect. This usually occurred to him after about the tenth drink, but being long out of training he succumbed on this occasion after the fourth. Right in the middle of a sentence Mr. Lee became suddenly bereft of his r's, and he spoke with the soft accent popularly believed to exist only below Mason and Dixon's line. So pronounced was this that a Mississippian would have been of the opinion that Mr. Lee was an ultra Southerner—a native, perhaps, of Brazil. In truth, Mr. Lee was a Southerner as he claimed to be. He hailed from southern Ohio.

"Gran'fatha," he began, "had a hoss—a maah, ratha—that at a mile an' a quatah simply could not be beat. Her name was Lucille, an' with his own nigga boy, Sam, as a jockey—"



"Shut up, Lee!" thundered the Judge. "I don't want to have to listen to that rubbish again. Give our host a chance to inform us how he makes this truly delightful beverage."

Thus rebuked, Mr. Lee subsided into a sulky silence, while the Judge passed his tumbler to Mr. Duncan, who was now serving from a can marked "Paris Green."

It was a triumphant moment for Mr. Dumont. He rose to his feet as though responding to a toast.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I just hit on this combination by accident, you might say. I have forgotten a few of the ingredients, because the day I mixed it up I drank two quarts of Bourbon that the express company delivered to me by mistake; but I can give you the main things I put in it."

"First, you take a barrel of cider—if you haven't got any cider take vinegar—and in this you stir all the sugar you can get—say ten or twenty pounds. Then you boil a peck of prunes, that's what gives it the colour, for two or three hours, and in this you can put in some grapes if you got any. Some dried fruit, too, helps out—like apricots, peaches or pears. But I didn't have any of these so I put in, as I remember it now, six jars of strawberry jam. The recipe calls for a dozen cans of peaches, but as I didn't want to make a trip to town for them I substituted a case of tomatoes and five cans of stewed corn. That's what gives it the slightly acid taste. Then you put in about a handful of borax to keep it sweet, but if you haven't got any borax quicklime will do just as well. The encyclopedia says to add a little gelatine to get a good clear result, but I didn't have any so I poured in a bottle of mucilage, which is just as sticky and cheaper, too. Then last of all comes the yeast,—about fifteen or twenty cakes is right. Be sure and don't forget the yeast, cause that's where she gets her sparkle."

"Then you let her set for a week—

and be sure and leave the bung out if you don't want to get blown up. Let her 'work' for a while. In about three days she begins to let off gas—roars like a busted steam main. But don't be afraid. There's no danger as long as you leave the cellar windows open. After about two weeks she begins to let down—just whistles and toots a bit on cold nights. Then you bottle her, tying in the corks with the strongest cord you can get. Let her lay for another month—and she's right."

"An astonishingly simple recipe," said the Judge, putting back in his pocket a memorandum book in which he had made notes. "And one, sir, that will attain great popularity, I am sure. Mr. Dumont, I congratulate you as a benefactor of the race."

He shook Dumont's hand warmly and passed his glass to Mr. Duncan.

The dinner, which Doc Clark had promised would be served in the room, was forgotten, and, the stock in the first suitcase being exhausted, the other one was opened.

A drink now from a bottle purporting to contain one full quart of "Snodfish's Pure Indigo Bluing" seemed to revive Mr. Lee, who spoke in a rather melancholy way of his girl "from the bluegrass region of Kaintucky, sah." He was moved to song, rendering in a throaty tenor the chorus of "She Was Bred In Old Kentucky," or at least as much of it as he could remember, missing words and lines being filled in with the usual *da de da de dum* and which Judge Hawper recognized immediately as Italian.

"Ah," he said, wisely, "a bit from 'Rigoletto.' Could you give us something from 'Parsifal'?"

By way of compliance Mr. Lee attempted "Suwanee River," but, cracking on the high notes, he dropped his pitch a half octave and medleyed into the more sprightly "Robert E. Lee," finishing in a burst of applause.

The sympathy aroused by Lee's



hints of blighted romance, together with the success of his vocal efforts, aroused in the bosom of Mr. Duncan a flame of envious bitterness. Mr. Lee had grabbed the spotlight and Mr. Duncan resented it. He told them that Lee was not the only one who had suffered. There was a certain lady in Dubuque, Iowa, it appeared, who had made desolate the heart, the soul, and the very bowels of Mr. Duncan's existence, and, in imitation of the star who had preceded him, he too essayed operatic expression. Not knowing a ballad native to the state of Iowa, Mr. Duncan selected as a vehicle for his outpouring "The Old Oaken Bucket," which he sang with great fervor and lung-power, ending with, "And that's the kind of a girl she was."

Conversation of a general nature now followed. The administration in Washington was cordially damned, as was the income and the excess profits taxes, and, of course, the whole theory and practice of Prohibition. Judge Hawper entered into a long discussion of the political policy of the Czech Slovaks with especial reference to the Bulgarian frontier, following which Mr. Dumont gave them the results of his thirty years study of the pecan nut, and despite the fact that the non-resident member had never seen a pecan other than on a grocer's shelves they gave him a respectful hearing, due, no doubt, to a certain obvious fact.

"Speaking of nuts," said Mr. Lee, giggling loudly, "there's a lot right here in this club."

Judge Hawper stared over his glasses. "Mr. Lee, that is a pun, sir. And a pun, sir, is the lowest form of wit next to shaking a bush. Let it never happen again in my presence!"

Tears gathered in the tenor's eyes. He was deeply injured and his attitude was as one who suffered great and almost unbearable humiliation. A great bitterness suffused his soul, and in a moody silence he sat plan-

ning vengeance. At last he had it. He would make a speech—an oration which would begin with an apology and then climb by degrees to bolder and more stirring words, ending in a challenge to mortal combat.

Afire with the idea, he was on his feet now, and in a low tremulous voice began his address. He begged the pardon of all present, and to the astonished Judge he was more than abject. Whereupon Hawper gave him a powerful slap on the back and magnanimously told him that all was forgiven and to let bygones be bygones and otherwise interrupted the thread of his thought to the extent that he sat down very much confused and crestfallen.

"Speaking of automobiles," said Mr. Duncan, which no one had, "I see by the paper that out in Indianapolis an ordinary stock car made over six thousand miles in four days. That's going some!"

Doc Clark pulled from his pocket a pencil and on the back of an envelope began to figure.

"Why, that's fifteen hundred miles a day," he announced, after several minutes of intense application. "By George, at that rate it wouldn't take no time to cross the continent from coast to coast!"

The Doctor, once he had drawn his pencil, was, as most of them knew by previous experience, invincible. Given any statement of fact he could, by arithmetical process, arrive at any conclusion—or at least so it appeared to them.

"Yes, sir," continued Clark, "that's getting over the ground in a hurry. But, of course, that's racing speed. Now cut it in half and just jog along at seven hundred and fifty, say seven hundred, miles a day and how long would it take to get to the Pacific Coast?"

"Probably not more than two days," ventured Mr. Dumont, having rather vague ideas of geography and distance.

"I should say that two days would



suffice very comfortably," agreed Judge Hawper. "And no doubt give one a leisurely opportunity to view the scenery as well."

## IV

THE discussion of such a trip, though purely academic, occupied them for some time, and it was this that furnished the inspiration to Mr. Lee. Squelched on every occasion by the Judge, he had been sitting in sullen silence, dimly conscious that to regain his fallen estate he must do something startling—something heroic. It came to him now like a flash, and rising quietly to his feet he went to the 'phone.

"A taxi for Mr. Lee," he ordered. "At once."

"Gentlemen," he said, turning to the others, "I've ordered a taxicab. I'm going to take you to Los Angeles."

He made this simple statement and sat down.

The effect was electrical. There was handclapping by all, and Mr. Duncan and Doc Clark gave three lusty cheers. Mr. Dumont, however, protested sadly that multitudinous farm duties forbade his absence, and Judge Hawper regretted that a trial set for the following day was an obstacle that could not be surmounted. But the Judge was grateful. He was touched, he said, by the simple and unaffected way in which the invitation had been presented, and it was ample proof of the unostentatious ways and the great soul of the man from whom it had come. With this as a preliminary fanfare the Judge warmed to his subject. He began at the very moment of his acquaintance with Mr. Lee—which incident, though he made no mention of the fact, was some time years back, when Mr. Lee had accidentally stepped on the Judge's pet corn. Then followed various incidents, which Mr. Lee tried in vain to recall, of the years that mellowed their friendship until

they had become as Damon and Pythias, and which, though being pure fiction, nevertheless brought a happy mist to Mr. Lee's eyes.

The Judge's oratorical effort impressed them as a masterpiece. If the truth be told it was loosely strung together potpourri of sentimental offscourings taken from various addresses at obituary ceremonies of the local bar and of some secret societies of which he was a member. In this work the Judge was a prime favorite, holding the record of a two hour oration over the remains of a man he had never heard of and whose name he did not know.

There was a vast deal of leave-taking now, and a stirrup cup for all—this time from the last shot in the locker, a can that had at one time contained a gallon of "Holcomb & Ducharm's Liquid Glue." Hardly had the last drop been exhausted than Doc Clark briskly began to throw the score or more of bottles and cans back into the suitcases and to speed the parting. The taxi then being announced, the party broke up.

## V

It was partly curiosity and partly a keen eye for business that caused the Reverend Dr. Nutrose to embark in the adventure, for he regarded a visit to the club as nothing less than that.

He had had the matter under consideration for some time, and now that he had definitely committed himself, he experienced a delightfully goose-bumpy feeling, a shivery anticipation, something like that of a flapper contemplating a slumming trip. Not that our club was different from any other club, or that it bore an evil repute; it was, in fact, regarded as eminently respectable. Still it had been the stronghold of a band of liquor-lovers for many years, and Dr. Nutrose was a rum-hater, a Prohibition advocate, and a Campbellite preacher.



Balanced against all this was the fact that the club had a large membership, among which there were a number of actual and many potential churchmen. Now, Dr. Amos J. Nutrose was a go-getter in the matter of increasing his flock, leaving few stones unturned. He had the tireless energy of an insurance agent and all the soft-voiced plausibility of an automobile salesman. So when Mr. August P. Dumbeck hinted that the club, of which he was president, might prove a promising field, Mr. Nutrose thought the matter over very carefully. After a month of hesitation, assailed by conflicting doubts and hopes, he at last consented to a cautious investigation.

The hour was late when they entered the building. This was of the Doctor's planning, for he was not unlike other men on questionable errands, and, he thought, the later the hour and the darker the night the better.

The pastor's first impressions were those of curiously mingled disappointment and relief. There was no suggestion of wickedness; the lobby was dimly lighted, and, save Ambrose, the colored night porter, who was on his knees half way up the stairs, vacuum-cleaning the carpet, the place seemed quite deserted. From the vacuum machine came a melancholic siren-like whine, the only sound that broke the stillness, and as for meeting any of the denizens of the place, Mr. Nutrose might as well have been exploring an ancient temple of Thebes.

Talking volubly of the changed conditions that, he said, augured well for the Doctor's work, Mr. Dumbeck showed him through the various rooms, and it was while they were in the rather remote part of the building that had once been the tap-room that three noisy gentlemen stepped out of the elevator and passing through the lobby entered a waiting taxicab outside.

The trio were, of course, Mr. Lee, Mr. Duncan and Dr. Clark.

"Where to, gents?" inquired the chauffeur listlessly.

"Los Angeles," said Mr. Lee, carelessly lighting a cigarette. "And don't forget you're hired by the hour and not by the mile."

"What?" ejaculated the driver. "Say, what's a eatin' on you guys?"

"And James," put in Doc Clark, "you can stop in Denver for breakfast."

But Mr. Duncan had another idea. "Let's take the Mexican route," he said. "Licker all the way!"

Duncan, with his curse of self-appointed leadership, always proved a thorn in Mr. Lee's side, and he represented the suggestion instantly.

"Who's giving this party?" he demanded. "You or me? Now listen. I haven't any idea of going through Mexico, and never did have. We're going through Canada. 'Cause why? 'Cause I happen to have too much sense to try to drive over a thousand miles of cactus. That's why. 'Nother thing: they speak 'Nited States in Canada—and they cook it, too. 'Nother reason is the scenery. It's s'perb—with the ozone of pines and balsam and the music of the sunny Saskatchewan—and everything. How can you beat it, I ask you?"

"I say Mexico," contended Mr. Duncan sullenly.

"The middle route—'Pike's Peak or bust!" shouted Doc Clark.

The argument waxed hot and loud, and the chauffeur, with the comfortable knowledge that the meter was well oiled and in good working order, settled back in his seat to let them fight it out.

Meantime, Dr. Nutrose and his guide having completed the survey of the rooms of the ground floor, returned to the lobby, tarrying here for a moment before proceeding farther.

"Now, Doctor," urged Mr. Dumbeck, "you could exert a splendid influence in the club. We need you, for there are a number of our young-



er members who really require looking after."

The minister nodded gravely. "No doubt, no doubt," he said.

"And," continued Dumbeck, "there is no reason why you should not join." He lowered his voice: "I can slip you in under the fence ahead of the waiting list."

The churchman was grateful for this offer, but still dubious. Some of his congregation were a bit old-fashioned, he said, and might think it queer for a minister to join a club.

"Preposterous!" exclaimed Mr. Dumbeck. "The club is no different from a Y. M. C. A. There is, of course, no liquor allowed on the premises, and I assure you that since the taproom has been closed we have become very sedate. You can see for yourself that quiet atmosphere of the place," he added, gesturing toward the deserted rooms.

There could be no denial as to this and Mr. Nutrose felt himself weakening.

"I feel very much inclined to give you my application," he said. "I am quite agreeably surprised."

"We have a few innocent games, such as billiards and pool on the floor above," said Mr. Dumbeck, eager to get over the worst part of the journey. "Let us walk up."

## VI

DESERTED by Doc Clark, who, with the liquor exhausted and the prospect of a free automobile ride in sight, coolly locked them out of his room, Judge Hawper and Mr. Dumont stood now idly in the hall.

The non-resident member looked at his watch. It was midnight. There was, however, a 12:30 train back to Cloverdale, and this he resolved to take, much, if the truth be told, to the Judge's relief. For when the last drop of the "home-made" was consumed the Judge regarded the incident as closed.

"Well, Brother Dumont," he

yawned, "it's getting late. I'll put you in a cab and then I shall go home."

Mr. Dumont was tired—and, moreover, Mr. Dumont was not unaffected by the contents of his own suitcases. His gait was a trifle unsteady, and his companion seemed to be a man of giant proportions with, strangely enough, two heads.

"S'good idea," he said. "Le's go."

The Judge pushed the button for the elevator, but there was no immediate response. He did not know that at that moment the elevator man was in the basement surrounded by a number of squatting bellhops and that, loudly snapping his fingers, he was calling on the very gods for assistance in making "Big Dick." A continued pressure on the button being equally ineffectual, Judge Hawper suggested the stairs. To this Mr. Dumont was responsive. Exercise, he said, was the very thing he needed. So picking up the luggage with its clinking cargo they started down.

The first three flights were made without incident. As they approached the fourth, however, Mr. Dumont stopped suddenly as a long, loud moan came to his ears. It was an eerie sound—like the whine of a buzzsaw eating into the heart of hard oak timber.

"Wha's 'at?" he demanded sharply.

The Judge paused and listened. The noise of the vacuum cleaner was so familiar to him that it made no impression.

"I hear nothing," he said. "Come on."

Muttering, and a little frightened, Mr. Dumont followed. The hall and the steps were only half lighted, and neither saw two men who were approaching them from the bottom. Nor did they see the night porter, bent low behind the railing at the sharp turn, or his tub-like machine perched perilously at the edge of the landing.



Half way down there was a sudden scream from the machine, a huge black python wrapped itself around Mr. Dumont's leg, and from the glittering head of the monster came a hiss and the air was sucked past the non-resident member's hot cheeks in close and dangerous proximity. All this Mr. Dumont saw in one brief terrorizing instant. Mere flesh could stand no more, and he let out a blood-curdling yell.

"Snakes! Snakes!" he cried. "I see snakes!"

He grabbed wildly at the Judge, who, startled, fell over the crouching porter, and the three of them, the suit cases of empty cans and bottles, the big vacuum machine, all in a confused mass, started down the stairs like a landslide. Somewhere along the trail of disaster the avalanche encountered Mr. August P. Dumbeck and the Reverend Dr. Amos J. Nutrose. The din was terrific. The heavy cleaning machine, so the Judge believes to this day, made

three separate and distinct rolls over his bruised ribs and legs, and somewhere in its flight the lid came off and a suffocating cloud of dust mercifully turned the lobby at the foot of the stairs into utter darkness.

Judge Hawper did not tarry. Shamelessly he deserted his companion, and without waiting for hat or coat burst through the door to the purer air outside. A taxicab was at the curb, and with no time to open the tonneau door he bounded into the front seat beside the driver.

"Take me home!" he bellowed. "Hurry! Quick!"

"All right, Judge," said the chauffeur, recognizing his fare despite the dust and grime that covered him. "But first I got to tell these other gents that the trip to Los Angeles is off. I ain't got enough gas."

To this there was no response. For on the back seat Mr. Lee, Mr. Duncan and the little doctor were asleep and snoring.



## Love's Coming

*By Neeta Marquis*

THE gladdest day that my heart e'er knew  
Was when Falselove came in the garb of True,  
And sunned himself in my glamour'd eyes  
While he taught me the songs of Paradise.

The saddest day—can my heart forget  
Brief hours drawn out in one long regret  
For that holden vision of soul? God wot!—  
Was when Truelove came, and I knew him not.





# The Impossible Romance

*By Mifflin Crane*

## I

MRS. BRINTON took the small apartment in Harley Street a month after the death of her sister. She was alone now, but her condition seldom brought her any melancholy; she enjoyed the quiet freedom of this new life.

The twenty years' association with her sister—it began when Mrs. Brinton was twenty-five, immediately after the divorce from her husband—had created certain ties and so, in a measure, she regretted her sister's death, felt lonely at times, missed the old habits, even the frequent, accustomed disagreements.

Yet she suffered from no sincere grief. In her sister's home she had been, after all, the dependent, and there were those unforgettable moments when she had been made to feel it. And how many times during the long years, even disregarding instances of direct unpleasantness, had she regretted the early, impetuous separation from Brinton; time had soon softened the harsh proportions of his misdemeanour.

Parted from him, the days that took her out of youth to middle age had passed in little things, the small quarrels, the small duties, the colourless little excitements. Now that she was alone, and retrospection came as a natural consequence, it astonished her to review her life and find it so meagre in event.

It was not, however, a discovery that involved the reaction of sharp emotion; her regrets were gentle, the twilight mood of melancholy.

Despite these emotions, life in this

little apartment was generally agreeable and her prospect occupied her thoughts equally with her sorrow for the past.

To a degree there came to her such charming anticipations as one feels in the face of a new adventure, an adventure with potentialities to change all the complexion of a life. She was free again, independent at last, and this was a condition that brought its implications—vague little expectancies, vague allures.

Harley Street was pleasant; she enjoyed its touch of another time. Although all the old families, once the city's aristocracy, had moved out long ago and the big brick houses had been remodelled and given over to many like herself, a flavour of the older spirit survived, like a scent of forgotten perfume. The air of gentility persisted, even without its true embodiment. The street was still quiet, the formal houses stood as memorials of a time more gracious, and people walking through seemed to take a subtle dignity from the street. Her front window gave her a good view up and down; she liked to muse there, watching the languid life below.

She had dropped the trivial people of her former acquaintance, her sister's tiresome friends; most of them were unaware of her new location. At the moment she felt very little urge to know new people; it was more pleasant to be alone.

Sitting at the window, looking down into the street, she was almost set apart from life. She saw the people of the street go in and out of their houses, came to recognize some of them, knew



the hours of their departure and return, wondered listlessly about their life in those periods that were concealed from her.

Then, late one afternoon, she saw a man emerge from the apartment-house directly across the street who was new to her. Her first glance was an indifferent one, but in a moment she was leaning closer to the window, her cheek touching the glass, her eyes widened in startled concentration.

She sensed the man's identity at once, in so far as it implied a close intimacy, even if recognition was not immediate.

He had descended the steps; he was walking slowly down the street. He was slim, middle-aged, very well set-up. A light-coloured spring overcoat was folded over one arm; in his hand he swung a cane. He did not look up and so saw nothing of her startled watching, but passed slowly and unconsciously, and was nearly out of the range of her window before the sudden realization of his exact identity came sharply to her. He was her former husband!

Realizing this, she drew back quickly, under the swift fear that he might turn his head, glance up, and see her there. A moment later she appreciated her absurdity—he could never make out her face; it was assuredly vague in the subdued light of her room. She leaned forward to the window again; he had turned the corner and was gone.

A disappointment swept over her in an emotional wave. She wanted to see him again, study his figure, his walk, the way he swung his cane. She felt an intensity of curiosity, that seemed to come out augmented from so many years of indifference. It startled her now to appreciate her long apathy to the life of this man, who had once touched her dreams into being, held her in his arms, given her a year of half-forgotten romance. In that moment it seemed incredible that she should have been so complacent, insensible, willing to forget.

Later, in the evening, when she had returned from her dinner at a little res-

taurant near by, her thoughts turned to the present, to the strangeness of the chance that had brought them both to the same street after twenty-five years, during which neither had seen the other. From that accident there were possibilities to be inferred that stirred her expectations.

She was sitting in her bedroom, before the mirror of her dressing-table, coiling her hair into two long braids for the night. Pausing, she moved her body forward a little, and looked closely into the glass. Beside the face that looked out to her she tried to summon another, her own face of a former time, when they had been together and both were young.

Contrasting the two, she found, of course, that the fundamentals were unchanged. As a woman of nearly forty-five she was still a brunette; skilful hairdressing could conceal the few white threads that were beginning to appear in the jet of her hair. The large, brown-black eyes, if less lustrous than those of the younger face, were still noteworthy and something of their characteristic candour remained.

Otherwise she understood the extremity of the change. The red of her lips had faded; the full mouth had lost its pouted curves, so that now, straighter in line, it seemed too large. Her cheeks had grown broader, the chin was heavier, her throat was no longer a column of slenderness. He, Brinton, appeared to have suffered less from the years than she: she visioned him again, coming out astonishingly from the opposite house, with the old, familiar manner.

Sooner or later they would meet face to face. What would he say, what words would they both find? She pictured the meeting, imagined their salutations—and then she found herself shrinking from it.

A curious fear of having him see her again possessed her, a hesitancy like a child's when he must walk into a room peopled with strangers. Perhaps this was her shrinking from the revelation of her changed self—he had known her only as a girl. It angered her to admit



such a cause. His opinion should mean nothing; he was part of another time, a memory.

She went to sleep indulging in some agreeable fancies. After all, it would probably be interesting to meet him again.

## II

YET, in the following days, she found herself running true to her first inclination, avoiding the chance of meeting. Preparing to go outdoors, she always turned instinctively to the window, to make sure that he was nowhere on the street. Coming out of the house, she looked up and down, like one who is afraid, and she felt that if she saw him she would hurry indoors again.

But from the concealment of her window she observed him a dozen times. She saw him go in and out, always the same—well set-up, self-possessed; essentially she understood that he had always been a charming man. She perceived that years had only added to his pleasant ease of manner, that appeared still touched with a flavour of quixotic eccentricity.

Of herself she felt immeasurably less assured.

Her desires fluctuated. Each morning, awakening, she thought of the prospect of meeting him with a pleasant thrill; it was romantic, so fully out of the ordinary. Later, her hesitancy asserted itself. Watching from her window, she would discover him leaving the house; imagining herself going out on the street at the same moment, their eyes meeting, recognition coming to both, she shrank definitely from the reality.

Her fears, acting through her imagination, encompassed naturally the chance meeting, occurring without her own design. She felt it would come, however. Of course, she never foresaw the curious complication it actually involved.

She had gone out early one afternoon, intending to walk up to the shopping district. The day was delightful;

all the trees were fully in leaf now; like a magic narcotic the languor of warm weather touched the manner of the passersby.

Mrs. Brinton felt caressingly at ease. For the moment her mind was liberated from all her recent quandary; she was again in the mood that came to her immediately after her liberation from the old, dependent life.

At the corner a small boy, running at play, collided with her and was gone in a moment like a shy animal; she laughed, adjusted her dress, looked up—and confronted her former husband.

He had turned the corner and in the instant's little excitement she had been unconscious of his step. She stared at him with widened eyes, startled, wordless.

Meeting her eyes, he stopped, and his own face took on the expression of surprise. She felt that he recognized her at once. A swift wonder passed through her mind: what would be his first words? She waited for him to speak. Her aplomb had abandoned her; she felt silly, a little hysterical, like a young girl meeting her first lover, and at the same time the ridiculousness of her emotions angered her.

Then, incongruously, Brinton raised his hat with a formal politeness. The expression of his face had changed.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "The child ran into you, didn't he? Did he hurt you?"

Her features, shaped into the surprise of unexpected encounter, still expressed astonishment, but now it resulted from another source, from an incredible discovery. Contrary to her first belief, he did not recognize her! With his formality of politeness he stood in front of her, waiting for her to speak.

His face had all its old quality; new lines were there, the old lines were deeper, and in the wrinkles about his eyes she found the outward manifestation of a certain cynicism that was absent from the countenance of her recollections, but withal she found him astonishingly unchanged. And, finding



him so, how was it possible that he did not know *her*?

But something had to be said; he was already surprised that she did not answer him.

She forced a smile to her lips.

"I didn't know what happened to me," she said. "The imp took my breath away. But, of course, I'm quite all right now."

He stepped aside to let her pass, but as she hesitated a moment, still incredulous of the outcome of their meeting, he gave her a quick, friendly smile and spoke again.

"After a fashion we seem to have met each other, don't you think?" he asked. "I was just going back to my rooms after a stroll, but really I'm bored; I don't want to go indoors so soon. I'd be awfully glad if you'd let me walk a little way with you."

His manner was charming, his politeness was unaltered; she was amused at his formality. She felt an hysterical impulse to laugh, to take him by the shoulders and shake down his poise, ask him if he had no memory at all, if twenty years had changed her into a gargoyle. But she only nodded, dropping her eyes from his own; he took her arm.

"I've seen you before," she murmured.

Her face was averted, but she knew that he turned his own sharply; when she looked there was a polite questioning in his glance.

"No, I don't mean that we've met lately and that you've forgotten. But we live in the same street; once or twice I've seen you coming out of your apartment. We're just across the street from each other."

"Well! I'm glad that we're neighbours," he said. "It may be you sometimes feel as dull as I do. Perhaps you'll let me run in and have a chat with you sometimes."

"I'd be glad," she answered. "I've only lived here a short time; I'm not used to being alone. It does get dull."

The conversation continued; she answered his questions and made little

queries of her own, but their talk seemed unreal, like banal dialogue repeated from a memorized page. She knew that she was often inattentive, and felt that he found her difficult to know, but her incredulity prevented her full acceptance of the situation.

They walked to the square, sat down for a time on one of the benches and, returning finally, he left her at the door of the apartment-house. She found herself promising to take dinner with him the following evening. She saw him lift his hat and go.

Indoors she hurried to her bedroom, rushed to the mirror, and stared astonished at her face reflected in the glass.

### III

DURING the days that followed she endeavoured to search out the changes in herself that had made of her a different woman, one so altered that this man, with whom she had once known the extremes of emotional experience—the delight of young dreams, the fulfillment, the heartbreak of disillusion—found her a stranger.

She exaggerated the physical changes revealed in her mirror, bitterly accusing herself of growing old, as if it were a willed act, persuaded herself that all traces of the young girl had vanished like a spilled perfume—but the sense of incredulity persisted.

Meanwhile, she saw him again, took dinner with him as she had promised. During this meeting they came to know each other better, that is, on their new basis. With the confusion of the first surprise gone, she found herself able to ask questions more intelligently; she learned something of his life during the years of their separation. He never spoke of having once been married.

They were seated in a conventional fashionable restaurant, receiving the usual indifferent service. The place was crowded. Young women and men drifted with nonchalant airs to their tables—boys who gallantly expended a week's earnings on a single dinner. Now and then the woman felt a genu-



ine pride in the appearance of her companion, who managed a better air than any of the men about him.

He talked quietly, charmingly, leaning over the table just enough to give the intimate touch.

She wondered what he had ever done to bring her so much pain, the pain she could still remember, that came with the end of their life together. The facts—of course she recalled them, but they were trivial now, ridiculously insufficient. His little affair with another girl—it seemed so trivial in perspective!

He was telling her of his life in Europe. He said he had left the United States when a young man—"just before I was thirty, and after a great disappointment," he told her.

"The war forced me back," he explained. "But I can't take up the old threads. I've grown to be a European, I suppose. Can't accustom myself to my own people."

"Do you find it so different?"

"Everything is different. Especially the women!"

She laughed.

"Then we're not all daughters of the same Eve?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I guess the difference is no more than superficial," he said. "But it's enough to upset an old man with fixed habits. I understand now the complaints of one of my young French friends, who returned from a trip to America with many discontented memories. He was frank enough to admit that he never had any success as a lover of American girls. He complained that the technique of success was too brutal, too abrupt for him; he was accustomed to the slow, interesting progress one makes in trying to interest a French woman. Men and women spar more in Europe, you know. When you finally kiss the girl, it's because she really loves you. . . ."

Then he added something about being beyond all that himself. The woman laughed. She wanted to ask him about his own experiences, but she feared certain revelations that might

concern herself. Now that they were establishing a wholly new acquaintance, she shrank from anything that might discover her, make her known to him.

It was an agreeable evening, but after she returned, alone again in her apartment, she found herself depressed once more. Again the sense of shameful age, a change that brought with it an irrational accusing, enveloped her like a sable cloak. He had been with her for hours, and still he did not know her, found nothing in her to recall the girl who had discovered her dreams in his presence and who, in her turn, must have given him certain visions of his own.

They had neglected to arrange for another meeting and in her depressed mood she avoided any accidental encounter on the street. But one evening he called, apologizing for his coming without any word.

"I saw the lights in your windows," he said. "Thought you might be alone and willing to talk to me."

They sat down in the living-room and presently his charm soothed away her depression; she was happy again.

Presently then, braving the question that had been eager but unspoken on her lips when they dined together, she asked him about the women he had known.

"You spoke of your friends the other night," she said. "But you didn't breathe a word about yourself. Imagine how curious I am!"

For several seconds he was silent.

With a slow movement he placed the cigarette he was smoking in the tray she had put at his hand. He leaned back a little in his chair; his attitude was reminiscent.

"I have only one memory that's worth telling," he said. "It's been my single, great sentimentality."

She smiled her encouragement.

"Perhaps that is because the best things come to us when we're young. They seem the best, anyway. After you're disillusioned the sharp zest is gone out of old delights."

He took up his cigarette again.



"It didn't happen when I was in Europe at all," he continued. "In fact, the woman was—my wife!"

Mrs. Brinton uttered a little cry, the involuntary expression of her sudden surprise, but covered it with a laugh, forced out between her immobile lips. He joined her with his own quiet laughter.

"I told you it was a great sentimentality," he said.

"But I had no idea you were married!" she found herself exclaiming.

"No, I *was*. I remember my wife as the sweetest of all the women I ever found. I lost her because I was so infernally young, there was such a zest in life; being in love with her made me terribly curious about other women."

Mrs. Brinton nodded, but kept her face averted. She pressed her knees tightly against her hands that lay in her lap. It seemed to her then that this effort of listening, this quiet pose in her chair, would at any instant demand too much of her strength; she would scream, she would run out of the room. Even now she was afraid that his ears would catch the fast pulsing of her heart.

But he was looking down at the floor, unconscious. A swift glance found him smiling, curiously. She wondered a moment at the quality of his smile; it seemed to imply more than the sentimental memories he evoked.

"You understand? I was foolish enough to meet some little flapper outside, concealing it from my wife. The flapper was so unimportant that I've forgotten her name, forgotten her face. We saw a hundred like her, no doubt, in the restaurant the other night. Well, I was discovered; I suppose I was idiotically careless and indiscreet. It should have been a comedy; my own little girl should have punished me by denying one of her kisses, which would have been wholly adequate in reality. Instead, she couldn't understand. It turned out to be a disaster. She separated from me, proved her case, and got her divorce.

"It wasn't in the beginning that I

realized how much she meant, but later; her memory grew. I had a chance to compare her with others. After I had gone to Europe I tried to find out where she was living and how, so that I could write, help her perhaps, try to take up the thread again. My letters never reached her. But she was the sweetest one; it's useless for me to tell you about anyone else. . . ."

He raised his face and their eyes met. He was smiling again, the puzzling smile she had seen a moment before, with implications she did not understand.

For an instant the smile seemed to hold an invitation, an acknowledgment of understanding, and the woman, her lips parted a little, gave herself up to the exchanged glances, forgetting the pretense she maintained. An old, giddy warmth came back to her, so long forgotten that it had the startling presence of a ghost, the warmth of another time. He broke the spell with a laugh.

"Do you find it very incredible?" he asked.

She was silent. He arose, crossed the room, and began to examine a print on the wall. She forced herself to speak—some trivial question. The conversation was resumed in a different channel. Later they parted formally.

#### IV

HE was gone, but the woman was exultant.

Her assurance was restored and augmented like a tide returning. She felt young; the stir and expectancy of romance ran in her veins as a fluid more potent than blood. She remembered the half-forgotten delights, sweetnesses that came back thrillingly inasmuch as their enactment seemed to have the chance of another birth. Again she lived through the range of her former emotions, feeling once more all the joy, all the pain. The last was done; the cycle returned to delight again.

How glad he would be when he realized that he had found her once more—"the sweetest one."



She would make no haste to tell him! To linger unknown was to augment the emotions that would come in the instant of revelation. Perhaps he himself would discover; that would be better; surely he must! She was the same woman, her heart was unchanged.

She visioned the second beginning of their romance—like the first. The flirtation, the growing eagerness, the first kiss. When he kissed her, if he still remained blind, she would tell him.

For a time she stood by the window in the room which he had just left. The blind was drawn, but a little breeze blew in from the street, moving the curtain rhythmically. It smelt of young leaves, new life.

She crossed the room, switched out the light, and entered her bedroom. Languorously she approached her mirror and glanced at her face, without any intention of doing so.

She saw the features so familiar in these latter days.

Once more the changes of twenty-five years were reflected back with their accusing bitterness. She drew away, startled, but, unable to resist, stared at the mirrored face again.

Then her folly of the past hour was apparent; of course he did not know her. To tell him would shock him and take away the sweet recollections of his early dreams. It was not this image that his memory recorded, but another face, the young girl's.

She drew back from the glass, closing and unclosing the fingers of her hands, that hung at her sides. He must never know, never guess. At best, he would only laugh at her. They had both grown old—an impossible romance!

A strange calmness came to her. As if her mind had been cleared from an

obscuring haze she saw the easiest course. She would go away, at once, tomorrow, and their intimacy would stop in its inception. The days were beginning to grow warm. It was a good time to leave for the mountains or the shore, and, returning in the Autumn, she could find another apartment.

As if to delay the least partial execution of her determination would be to hazard some disaster, she walked to the closet and began pulling out her frocks. She opened the lid of her trunk, lifted the trays from their grooves.

And she would never let him see her again. . . .

And then, in the midst of her preparations, she saw him again seated opposite her, making his confession . . . "the sweetest one." Once more she found the curious smile on his face, that seemed to imply an understanding—a mutual *conspiracy*!

That explicating word startled her. A silk sweater, taken from the trunk, dropped out of her hands, falling in a soft, amorphous heap at her feet. She straightened her body, stared across at the wall.

Slowly her eyes widened. Did his smile mean—? It must! Anything else was too incredible. She recalled other little betraying instances. Then he had recognized her from the first day; what a delightful bit of sparring he believed they had had together! Now it was over, and he would add his present respect to his old memories. How characteristic of him! Truly, he had always been a charming, clever fellow.

She bent down and picked up the silk sweater. She continued her packing. She both smiled and sighed.





# Apparition at the Domestic Hearth

*By C. F. O'Neal*

A WOMAN'S scream—that terrifying weapon of defense that Nature has given to her masterpiece—more blood-curdling than the roar of the lion, the howl of the wolf, or the hiss of the snake—pierced the night air. Prohibition was being enforced. Her husband had come home sober. She didn't know him.



## In Your Eyes

*By Ned Hungerford*

THE woods at dawn,  
Before the dew  
Has dripped into the earth—  
This is the gladness  
In your eyes—

The woods at night,  
When rain drops down  
Upon the fallen leaves—  
This is the sadness  
In your eyes—



WHEN the Devil leaves the house, Love sneezes and puts his feet in a hot mustard bath.



LOVE is the little Bolshevik of the emotions. Marriage is his Ellis Island.





# Premonition

*By A. I. Jenkins*

MRS. DOUGLAS ANDERSON had a peculiar feeling about the neighbour next door. To term the sensation either fear or distrust would be an exaggeration, yet it savoured a little of both. In what way the impression of mystification had been given was elusive, for although some of the woman's actions were unusual they did not furnish sufficient reason why Mrs. Anderson should concern herself. She had varied interests even though she was living in a small town. Anyway, she had lived in the city a sufficient number of years to acquire the indifference typical of the city bred.

Mrs. Anderson had been a bit more sophisticated at the time of her marriage than the social circle in which the marriage had placed her would approve. More sophisticated perhaps than Douglas Anderson himself might have cared to know. Therefore she did not tell him. Besides, she had decided to take the backward road of life, to cast aside her acquired tastes and characteristics and resume those with which birth and early training had endowed her. This was why she had deliberately closed her eyes to the slight heaviness of Douglas Anderson's nature and clung to her determination to marry him.

His money influenced her in an honest degree. She realized that she was more likely to make their marriage a success, to combat, with better chance of victory, any lingering desire for the foam and froth of life if she were placed in a position that made demands on her dignity as the wife of a solid citizen and leading business man of the town.

Up to the present time, ten months af-

ter the wedding, she had met these demands admirably. Her reward was an increasing respect for her husband's sterling qualities and a growing interest in his friends who had seemed, at first, well—a trifle amusing.

She discovered that people in a small town were no longer out of touch with the world. Their automobiles ate up distances too readily to leave them longing when things worth while beckoned only three hours away. Actually they saw and heard more of the things worth while than many city people who were not obliged to make even the three-hour effort and so made none at all.

To go back to the woman next door. Mrs. Anderson caught a glimpse of her this morning as she hustled about the downstairs rooms of her house, the windows of which had all been opened and the curtains pinned back preliminary to a general cleaning.

Mrs. Anderson had opened her own windows for the same purpose, preparing for Mrs. Hobbs who came twice a week to do the work that the regular maid considered outside her province. Mrs. Anderson always cordially agreed with those ladies of her ten months' acquaintance who asserted that the help problem in a small town was even greater than in the city. She felt sure they must be right, so why explain that such difficulties had not been within the range of her experiences since hotel apartments are automatically attended to and cafés are open at all hours.

Returning to the woman in the next house—the two smiled and nodded to each other across the lawn glistening in the early morning sun. The distance



between them was a little too great to span genteely with the voice, especially when they had never been introduced.

By the way, why had they never been introduced? Why had the neighbourly call, which Mrs. Anderson was justified in expecting, been withheld? Her memories of such things might be somewhat dimmed, but it seemed to her that the neighbourliness that she remembered had included short, informal calls in the morning hours, an exchange of embroidery patterns and cake recipes, a hundred small tokens of interest and kindly feeling. Obviously she could not, as a newcomer, open negotiations for such pleasant intercourse, and just as obviously her neighbour did not intend to do so.

The woman appeared to be in good standing with the "best" people. At least Mrs. Anderson had seen such representative women as Mrs. Potter and Mrs. Nichols bow to her on the street and noted the cordial response to her smile accorded by Mr. Hooper, the banker. Yet no one ever went to her house and no one invited her out. Mrs. Anderson never met her at any of the half dozen weekly teas, bridge parties, literary or musical afternoons. She did not even know her name. Of course that could be easily learned. Just a question dropped almost anywhere, a simple query put to her own husband, for Mrs. Anderson had seen Douglas raise his hat and pause an instant one morning when the woman was in her front yard, and though they apparently exchanged no words, the smile with which Mr. Anderson was favoured was peculiarly direct and significant even to a distant observer. There was also an odd hesitancy in Mr. Anderson's manner at the time and the expression of his face was different from any his wife had ever noted there before.

She was the only close neighbour, it chanced. Mr. Anderson, desiring space, had built his house on the edge of town and with the one exception the property near by was unimproved. The main highway to the city passed the door, but at a comfortable distance. A stretch of

lawn well shrubbed and bordered at the roadside with big maple trees gave seclusion and protection from the noise.

To revert to the neighbour. Had Mrs. Anderson ever seen her before they lived side by side? She thought not. The woman might have seen her, possibly midst surroundings quite different from those in which she was to be found at the present time. The thought was not particularly disturbing. There was a comfortable certainty in Mrs. Anderson's mind that it made little difference how many of her husband's acquaintances had previously known her by sight. The times and places when her mode of conduct might have failed to conform with village ideas of propriety had been judiciously chosen. Any in that company had been, of necessity, of it. Pretty secure was Mrs. Anderson, she meditated.

## II

"I JUST want to know can I go home tonight," petitioned Nettie, the maid, thrusting her head in at the door, "I can get everything ready for breakfast before I go an'—"

"The 'phone is ringing," interrupted Mrs. Anderson, and Nettie's head was withdrawn. It reappeared a moment later.

"It's Mr. Anderson and he wants to talk to you."

Mrs. Anderson responded promptly. Douglas did not like to be kept waiting.

"Very well, dear. Certainly I will. Not this time, thank you just the same. All right—good-bye."

Thus Mrs. Anderson in reply to a request that she pack her husband's bag and have Albert call for him with the car right away, as he must make a trip to the city, and wouldn't she like to go with him as he might be gone two or three days.

Albert on the way, Mrs. Anderson was again reminded by Nettie that the question of a leave of absence still pended.

"Yes, you may go," consented Mrs. Anderson, "Mr. Anderson will be away



so you needn't bother about breakfast."

Nettie, with her own interests at heart, checked a suggestion that with Mr. Anderson, Albert and herself away, Mrs. Anderson would be left alone. Probably the missus didn't mind anyway. She didn't look like the scary kind. If she wanted her to, likely Mrs. Hobbs would stay. Mrs. Hobbs was on hand and hard at it.

Mrs. Anderson strolled out and waited under one of the maples near the road to wave good-bye to her husband. She looked so pretty standing there that he could not pass with a farewell no closer than a salute of the hand, and ordered Albert to stop.

"Wish you were going," he said as he edged her behind the tree out of sight of Albert and kissed her, to discover that he had backed her into full view of Mrs. Hobbs, airing draperies on the front porch.

"Never mind her," comforted Mrs. Anderson. "I didn't like to disappoint Mrs. Nichols, she has a bridge party this afternoon."

"Next time then," declared Mr. Anderson fondly, working her around to a new angle, "Good-bye."

He kissed her once more, this time with their sole neighbour as spectator, and blushing, hurried back to the car. Mrs. Anderson saw him lift his hat to the neighbour as he passed—saw her amused smile in response and noted again her peculiarly significant expression.

That evening Mrs. Anderson settled down to the enjoyment of a magazine, rather grateful for the peaceful silence of the house. Darkness came and she lit the piano lamp beside her. It cast a soft, golden glow within a small radius, leaving the farther reaches of the room in shadows.

When she tossed the magazine aside and looked at her wrist watch it was ten o'clock, the favourite bedtime of most of the villagers. A glance at the house next door showed the light already transferred from the first floor to the second.

Mrs. Anderson smiled a little to her-

self, remembering that a few months ago it would have been the hour for beginning, not ending, the evening. How would it seem to pass a night in the old way again? Had she been quite ready after all to say good-bye to that life? Or had she, temporarily jaded, been frightened into a premature renunciation—alarmed by the thought that, if she tarried too long, escape might be difficult or even impossible?

Such misgivings seemed absurd now. She had rebounded so quickly, her strong body unimpaired, her youth still clamorous within her. However, she was not sorry she had played safe. If life was a bit slow at times she resolutely prodded her judgment into laying out for fresh approval the display of good reasons why speed is less desirable as a steady gait than moderation.

She took up a partly-embroidered scarf and began work on it. An hour later she heard a light step on the porch. Startled, she held her needle poised for a moment and listened, then courageously stepped to the French doors and pushed the drapery to one side.

Her face almost touched the face of a man. With a little cry she fell back, then laughed softly and opened the door.

"Hello, Tom," she said.

In reply he cupped his hands, turned toward the road and shouted,

"This is the place!"

At the answering din Mrs. Anderson caught her breath in consternation. The decorous night was suddenly turned into an orgy of sound. Above the other voices she could hear Vi Westerlund's, and Vi, with Chet Saunders, was the first to come into view. The pair were executing a shimmy down the path.

"Thought you were hidden, didn't you?" Tom was mocking; "You haven't given me my kiss yet."

In spite of her resistance he corrected the alleged oversight.

The wave of resentment that swept over her as his lips pressed hers revealed to Mrs. Anderson in a swift moment how far she had traveled on the backward road.



Evelyn Waters and Dick Day overtook and passed Vi and her partner, Evelyn rushing up and grabbing Mrs. Anderson in a tempestuous embrace.

"Hello, old dear, think you could get away from the old bunch?" she paraphrased Tom's question.

There was a third couple, and with shrieks of laughter and raillery not too delicately chosen, the entire company trooped up Douglas Anderson's steps. Mrs. Anderson cast one despairing look toward the house next door. This, her inner consciousness told her, was the answer. This was the thing fate had been holding in store and of which intuition had warned her. Premonition, that uncanny, never-failing guide, had whispered that in the hands of this woman next door her destiny would sometime lie. The time had come and Mrs. Anderson had no doubt of the result.

A whisper from those lips that always smiled so maddeningly, of a visit late at night from friends, evidently intimates, who were anything but a credit to Douglas Anderson's wife—and this in Douglas Anderson's absence! Lost, then, the careful work of ten months, and worse by far, lost forever the opportunity to win to the safe haven of respectability.

With nervous haste Mrs. Anderson ushered her guests inside and closed the doors, though aware that closed doors could not muffle the boisterousness of Tom Austin's crowd.

"My word, how perfectly sweet!" shrilled Vi, pointing to the chair beside the reading lamp, draped with the bit of fancy work.

"Charter member of the Fireside Sitters League," chortled Dick, "Where's the deacon, Cleo?"

Howls of derision met the reply that he had gone to the city. Tom pounded from the piano weird Oriental dance music understood to be descriptive of Mr. Anderson's pastime while away from home.

"It's a duck of a dump," pronounced Evelyn, back from a tour of the house, "reminds me of Pat's."

"Remember how I swung you down

over the balcony one night at Pat's, Cleo?" demanded Tom.

Mrs. Anderson remembered. Half a dozen arms had been stretched out for her and perched on masculine shoulders she had been taken on a triumphal march. Evenings were not spent quite that way among her present associates.

"And the night you and Vi hid in the fireplace to see what a stag party was like?"

"And hear!" amended Vi, "We were never the same afterward."

"That was because of the price we made you pay when we found you," explained Tom, "Shall I tell 'em, Cleo?"

"Go ahead," permitted Vi with languid indifference.

But Tom's gaze was fastened curiously on Mrs. Anderson's face where, to his eyes, accustomed as they had long been to read the lights and shadows there, torment was ill concealed. He had been aware of the reluctance of that compulsory kiss.

At two o'clock Mrs. Anderson spread a buffet supper with weary apologies for its incompleteness.

"We have the trimmings in the car," Chet suggested, and a stampede followed. Only Mrs. Anderson and Tom remained behind. As the night was once more turned into tumult Mrs. Anderson dropped her head in her hands. Tom gazed at her with thoughtful eyes. Indifferent to his observation she rose and crossed to the window.

There was no light in the house next door—there wouldn't be, of course, but a curtain stirred by the breeze showed a casement opened wide. Mrs. Anderson could almost see the figure she was certain knelt beside it—could feel the eyes that searched, and sense the ears that heard. Tom had followed and now laid his hand on her arm.

"I'm sorry, Cleo," he apologized, "I had a hunch you wanted to cut us out. I was a bit sore but I had no business to do it. It won't happen again."

"I think this once will be enough," replied Mrs. Anderson lifting a wan face that wore a smile tinged with bitterness.



When Mrs. Anderson's guests left at four o'clock, Tom did what he could to get them away quietly, but even higher than the voices of the men rose those of the three women, unmistakably thick and beyond control, the last morsel that the town would wish for rolling under its tongue.

## III

DOUGLAS ANDERSON returned to his home the next day.

"You look tired, didn't you sleep

well?" he inquired with earnest anxiety of his pale, unsmiling wife.

"Not very." She hid her face against his coat-sleeve and for a moment allowed herself the comfort of his sheltering arm, then drew away and faced her defeat.

"Douglas, who is the woman next door? What is her name?"

"Her name? Why, don't you know her name? Don't you know who she is? She's Mrs. Soules. Haven't you ever noticed how queer she looks? She's deaf and dumb, you know."



## Foresight

*By John Temple*

SHE listened as he talked.

"I am rich," he said. "If you marry me, my money, my motor cars, my yacht, my houses, everything will be yours."

"Fine!" she exclaimed delightedly, then her brow clouded.

"But what will *you* do?" she asked.



THE most sublime force in life is hatred. To love is to surrender; to hate is to carry on. A man who hated dirt took the first bath.



NOTHING is more charming than a pretty wife, but if you want real love, marry a homely girl with a broken heart.



IT was Delicia's most hated rival who spread the story about her surpassing virtue and modesty.





# The Matrimonial College Yell

*By Sam Hellman*

SHE loved an idealist, married an optimist and buried a pessimist.



## In Love

*By John V. A. Weaver*

"IN love," you tell me, "I'm in love again.  
Say, he's a reg'lar doll! Some boy-chum! Oh,  
I'm nuts about him—" And you go on so  
The way you always rave about your "men."

In love! The nerve! Why, on'y just last week  
It was a gob; and then the week before  
That willy-boy down to the dry-goods store—  
You make me sick so I can't hardly speak!

Why, when love hits you, everything's a dream,  
It's like you'd took some dope, and nothin's real  
Excepting that there face you always see

Wakin' or sleepin'. . . . All the time you scheme  
How you could help him . . . work . . . or lie . . . or steal—  
Die, even. . . . And you squawk, "In love" to me! . . .



A BEAUTIFUL woman smiled at a young girl's fiancé. The devil bit  
another nick in his pitchfork handle.



L OVE, my dear, is me in terms of you.



# Répétition Générale

By George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken

## § 1

*Conversation on Theater-Going—  
The scene is the Fifth Avenue dining-  
room in Delmonico's. Dinner is just  
done.*

\* \* \*

**NATHAN.**—I thought you might like to put in the evening at the theater. I have two tickets for . . .

**Mencken.**—Thanks excessively, but you may give your second ticket to the waiter, or shove it down the neck of that fat girl over yonder. I have at last come to a firm resolution: I shall never enter a theater again in this life.

**Nathan.**—Well, old cock, you miss a lot.

**Mencken.**—Exactly. I miss a lot of balderdash. I miss such puerilities as would make even a Congressman or a university president turn sick. For four or five years past you have been luring me into the theater now and then—and every time, without a single exception, I have been full of malaise for two days afterward. Do you remember that you took me to the first night of "Common Clay"? And to "Remnant," the night John Williams fell over the cuspidor? And to "Curiosity," down in Greenwich Village? And to Tom Dixon's anti-Bolshevist play, with the hooch dance? And to "Tiger! Tiger!?" And to "Up in Mabel's Room"? And to see Robert Mantell?

**Nathan.**—You have run in bad luck.

**Mencken.**—Precisely. If I live to be a thousand years old I'll never forget that performance of "Common Clay," with John Mason moaning and snorting around the stage like a saloon keeper raided by the police, and poor old Paul Armstrong out on the sidewalk arguing

that it was a masterpiece spoiled by some obscure stage-manager. I drank more that night than is good for a man of my learning. I swore by the Lord God that I'd never enter an American theater again. But I went back—not once, but a dozen times. Now I propose to keep my oath at last. Honour is honour.

**Nathan.**—You speak, characteristically, like a nanny-goat. Because you have seen a dozen or two very bad plays, you forget that now and then there is a good one. You simply don't know the theater.

**Mencken.**—With the highest respect, Bah! I was in active practice as a dramatic critic for six or seven years. I was the first critic in Christendom ever to write a book on Shaw. I am the only American who has ever edited Ibsen. I am familiar with the drama of eight or ten countries, including the Scandinavian. I constantly read plays, both printed and in manuscript, and have a very good collection of dramatic literature, including the largest Ibsen collection in the world.

**Nathan.**—Piquant, and highly interesting! Yet all your lofty boasting simply bears out my case. I didn't say that you weren't familiar with the drama; I said that you weren't familiar with the theater. The two are quite distinct. You read too many plays, and don't see enough. What you overlook is that the performance of a play is not merely the intoning of the lines by a herd of pantaloons. It is, above all, a show. It is ocular. One goes to a bad play, but sees a pretty wench. It is enough. One goes to a worse play, and sees two pretty wenches. It is more than enough.



*Mencken.*—Don't go any further. Even one is more than enough. I can't imagine getting any pleasure out of sitting in a stuffy theater, and gaping at a sweet baggage in company with a thousand shoe-drummers, song-writers, actors out of work, Grand Archons of the Knights of Pythias, curb-brokers, press-agents, loose women, clergymen off on toots, persons who believe in Jacksonian democracy, newspaper reporters and unhappy wives. Granted that a genuinely cute one comes out to show herself off. What is the fun staring at her from a distance, with the foot-lights between and a couple of police sergeants lolling about in the rear? When I happen upon a pretty gal who entertains my eye I like to engage her in conversation, and perhaps chuck her under the chin. What a pleasure it is to observe her manœuvres in the presence of a literary gent—her swift launching into the subject of Rabindranath Tagore, her confession that the true story of her life would make a wonderful novel, her anecdote of her uncle who was editor of a newspaper in Lima, O., her immediate assumption that one believes in free love and will presently say something naughty. I always accommodate them. More often than not, my own stuff makes me blush, for I am a poor hand at polite indelicacy and I hate the obvious—but it always seems to please them. Who ever heard of such a miss getting offended when one introduced the sub-motif in F sharp minor? Like every other vain fellow, I delight in shocking the virtuous, but it is a pleasure that I seldom enjoy any more. However, the encounter itself is agreeable enough. A man is an idiot who says that he doesn't like to talk to a pretty girl. It is, perhaps, the most delightful of all imbecilities. I'd leave a performance of Beethoven's Eighth to do it. I'd almost leave a good meal to do it.

*Nathan.*—If, as you observe, a man is an idiot who says that he doesn't like to talk to a pretty girl, put me down at once for an idiot. (*Your sleeve, Gustavus, is in the remains of the Camembert.*) I like a pretty girl as much as

anyone, but spare me from talking to her. I have yet to find a pretty girl who understands the technique of silence. Talking to a pretty girl is much like having gazed admiringly for an hour at a beautifully carved Sonora and then suddenly hearing the damned thing play "The Livery Stable Blues." I'd leave a performance of "Rosenkavalier," or a quart of Chambertin, to *look* at a pretty girl, but surely not to address her.

*Mencken.*—You are eloquent—but you fail to move me. The trouble with *you* is that you don't know what to *say* to a pretty girl.

*Nathan.*—Good Roderigo, I confess it. There is something about a pretty girl that ties this old tongue. I imagine that it's because I can't synchronize my tongue and my eye. I suppose that you, however, your eye fixed immovably by the sudden bursting of a dazzling, multi-coloured skyrocket, can simultaneously recite Lincoln's Gettysburg address.

*Mencken.*—You suppose wrong. You miss the point. The only way to talk to a pretty girl is to talk nonsense. And I am a virtuoso of nonsense.

*Nathan.*—Say no more, I agree with you perfectly. But we were talking about the theater. You had better come along with me. The play is one of your old friend Ibsen's.

*Mencken.*—What! Ibsen!! Not for ten thousand dollars! Seeing old Heinie in a theater at this late day is like going to a Y. M. C. A. picnic in a cemetery. Make it a burlesque show, and I'll go you.

*Nathan.*—Burlesque is no longer any good. They've taken all the jounce out of it. They've censored out all the old loud jokes, the faded tights, the seltzer siphon, the trouser walloper—everything that made it. Now it's nothing but advanced vaudeville in overalls.

*Mencken.*—Too bad. The theater is essentially a bazaar of vulgarity. To refine it is to kill it as a source of diversion for refined persons.

*Nathan.*—The English are a wiser lot in this regard than we. The King, they say, has lately knighted George Robey, the vulgarest actor on the Anglo-



Saxon stage, and has given the cold shoulder to Charles Hawtrey, the most refined.

*Mencken.*—What pleasure, in God's name, do you get out of seeing Ibsen in the theater at this belated hour?

*Nathan.*—Absolutely none.

*Mencken.*—Then why do you go?

*Nathan.*—I don't go to the theater for pleasure, but out of curiosity. Just as I go to Montmartre in Paris, the Tiergarten in Berlin, or to Coney Island in New York. I like to observe how *other* people find pleasure in the theater. This, I believe, is at the bottom of all theater-going. Where could you find a man who would go to a theater if he were given to understand that he would be the only person in the auditorium? A man isn't said "to go to the play": he is said "to go to the theater." The phrase is not accidental; it is exact. He goes less to see a play than a crowd. That's why a circus never in the history of the modern world has failed to play to big business.

*Mencken.*—Your remarks are typically those of a ninth-rate campus snob. You are trying to make me believe that you go to the theater to witness the boobs at their degrading pleasure. The fact is you go there as a boob yourself. The theater is essentially a boob trap. Whenever I went to it in your company it was because alcohol and the persuasive philosophies of such fellows as Brander Matthews, David Belasco, Al Woods and Robert Edmond Jones had reduced me temporarily to the intellectual state of a Presbyterian deacon. No civilized man in a civilized moment ever goes to the theater. If at such a time he feels the need of recreation he goes to hear an orchestra concert or reads a good book—or even a bad book.

*Nathan.*—And again typically, my dear Tewksbury, you seek to make an impression upon me—and upon that good-looking woman at the next table—by sedulously—and rather loudly—evading my point and seizing on another about which you have something saucy to say. Who contends that going to the theater is a pleasure? Only a few mo-

ments ago I observed that it was not. You posture, too, when you say that when you are looking for pleasure you go to a symphony concert, or read a good book. You forget that I know you, old tosspot! I know well enough the yokel nature of the pleasures you seek and cherish.

*Mencken.*—You have become in the early years of your senility such a mass of preposterous affectations that it gradually becomes impossible for a man of refined instincts to hold any conversation with you whatever. For example, consider your doctrine that it is not a pleasure to go to the theater. What could be more erroneous? If it is not a pleasure, in God's name what is it? I insist against all your evidences and syllogisms that you yourself go to the theater in search of the precise thing you disdain. In other words, you enjoy the adventure intensely. What is true in your gabble is this: that the sort of pleasure you enjoy is essentially *infra dig.* It differs in degree, but not in kind, from such pleasures as simple men get out of playing golf, engaging each other in bridge combats, reading the *New York Times*, choosing neck-ties, watching circus parades, singing "The Star Spangled Banner," and praying to God. Every man has his moments of weakness and at such moments he turns invariably to that sort of recreation. All I maintain is that my own depravities are measurably superior to those of the theater-goer. If I read a book for pleasure, it's almost invariably a bad book—that is a book condemned by the right-thinking opinion of Christendom. If I engage a pretty creature in conversation, it is surely not for any lofty purpose. If I go to a concert, it is nine times out of ten with the aim of laughing in a superior manner at the idiotic antics of some English composer.

*Nathan.*—You support my argument for me. I go to the theater for precisely the same reason. Surely, as I have already said to you, I do not go to see the plays of such ducks as Ibsen for any amusement that the plays themselves might give me. I derive pleasure from



the spectacle precisely as you, in your case, derive pleasure from reading dull books, talking to duller women, and listening to even more stupid English fugues. Although you do not seem to know it, you yourself get the same kind of pleasure, and in exactly the same way, as I. The only difference between us is that you favour a sort of emotional *pas seul*, while I go in for quadrilles.

*Mencken.*—*Quod erat demonstrandum.* In brief, you agree with me absolutely. What I argue is that theater-going is entirely devoid of intellectual content. You now say the same thing. Nevertheless, I suspect that your mind is still full of some sort of vague notion that the theater is measurably above, say, a Methodist camp-meeting, a chautauqua or a zoological garden. Here, with the highest respect, I believe that you are in error.

*Nathan.*—Your arguments are indirectly so good that they defeat you. You say that you are not going to the theater with me tonight because you find an insufficient pleasure in such an adventure. Yet you sit here and spend the whole evening listening to my arguments. That this is a great pleasure, I do not deny. But think, my dear Hugo, what you are missing—what I am missing. The curtain is already up. A two-hundred-and-ten pound Nora is yelling her head off at a Helmer who wears a conspicuously false set of whiskers that are constantly in the act of coming unglued. Meantime, in the neighbourhood of our fauteuils, the ancient critic for the *Evening Post* is screwing up a large frown and giving every evidence of being deeply impressed by the bosh. Now Nora, in a pair of twenty-five dollar Slater slippers, a three-hundred dollar gown from Bendel's and a ruby stomacher, is deploring her sad lot. Again, meanwhile . . .

*Mencken.*—My dominant craving, like that of every other civilized man, is for beauty. How much beauty is in the spectacle you offer? You mention the dramatic critic of some obscure cheese-paper. Think of what the face of such a man must be. Put beside it, the

façade of the Elks' Hall at Union Hill, N. J., is a thing of loveliness. Think of the mind behind the face—a mind paralyzed and petrified by fifty, sixty, seventy or eighty years of incessant theater-going. Let us call up Tom Smith and find out if he is still decent enough to invite us to a small glass. I have no more to say.

*Nathan.*—Your last remark comes too late by half an hour. Yet here, once again, you argue in the same channel that I do. It is the very absence of beauty that makes the spectacle inviting. You surely don't contend that Otto Dinkelspiel, a burlesque comedian, or Sidney Blatz, a music-show comedian, must be handsome in order to amuse you. Or a critic for the *Post*. Anyway, Tom Smith is at the very theater I am inviting you to. He is a great Ibsen fan.

*Mencken.*—You mistake me, my poor friend. Certainly I have not maintained that Tom Schmidt is a pretty fellow. I maintain nothing of the kind! He is not even well finished. Have you ever observed the spats he wears? He is the sort of man who would put a heavy band of crêpe around his plug-hat to go to the funeral of a marionette. Naturally, I make these remarks confidentially. It would be rather indelicate for me to criticize his personal aspect after having drunk so many carboys of his excellent synthetic wines—and just before drinking, I hope and pray, a few more gallons. My proposal, therefore, is that we engage some public vehicle and proceed at once to the gentleman's chambers. Even if, as you say, he is now polluting his mind with Ibsenism he will return anon and it would surely be a felicitous thing to be waiting in his hallway, as he comes in, to join him in his ten or twelve nightcaps. Let us, I repeat, employ a public hackman to haul us thither.

*Nathan.*—*Spero che abbiate abbastanza denaro?*

*Mencken.*—*Sì, ne ho abbastanza.*

## § 2

*An Optimistic Era.*—These are days of high hope. Everywhere one turns one



finds whole herds and races of men swelled up by hopeful gases. The Irish hope to deliver themselves from the English hoof, and to take their place among the free peoples, along with the Portuguese, the Hondurans and the Liberians. The French hope to bulge their frontier to the Rhine, and to convert the Germans into a race of slaves. The Poles hope to set up a military state that will make the German Empire seem like a puny and pusillanimous thing. The Armenians hope to enjoy liberty, fraternity and equality, and to massacre at least 100,000 Turks and Kurds a year. The Czechoslovaks hope to be happy and to get rich. The Italians hope to get rid of their debt without paying it. The Germans hope for better luck in the next round. Here at home the Democrats hope to recover from their current Bright's disease, once Woodrow is finally shelved. The Socialists hope to scare the plutocracy into being polite to them. The plutocracy hopes to scare the Socialists into fleeing to the sewers. The Liberals hope for the rose of common decency to grow from the turnip seed of democracy. The plain people hope for lower prices. . . . A grand carnival of hoping. The golden age of hoppers . . . We shall see.

§ 3

*The Local Laurel.*—Of all the countless English, Spanish, French and Belgian men of letters who lately invaded this friendly Power, the only one who made anything like an impression, the only one who was viewed with anything approaching favour, was Hugh Walpole. One may well ask why? For there were others, like Dunsany, who are superior artists; there were others, like Blasco Ibañez, who have about them the higher colour of sensationalism that is ever successful in denting the yokel American emotionalism; there were others, like Maeterlinck, who are more picturesque; and there were still others, like Galsworthy, who are surrounded with the air of reserve and aloof dignity that generally exercises an hypnosis upon the native susceptibles. In the face of these,

in the face of all this, how came it then that Walpole alone won the populace's choicest blooms? The answer is simple. It has nothing to do with Walpole's talents as a novelist. It has nothing to do with anything that Walpole said while he was over here. It has, in short, nothing to do with Walpole's accomplishments in the world of letters or upon the lecture platform. It has to do with Walpole, the fellow himself. Walpole is, intrinsically, the kind of man that women like, and the kind of man that women like is the man who always makes a social, artistic and generally popular impression in the United States.

Walpole, to men, is a charming and likable person. But so are a half dozen of the other Englishmen and Frenchmen who came over here at the same time. Yet these others haven't Walpole's gift for impressing the ladies. And, as I have observed, it is what may be called drawing-room woman suffrage that elects American favourites in the world of art. Alfred Noyes was elected in this manner, and many a greatly superior poet defeated. Richard Harding Davis was elected in this manner, and many an absurdly superior novelist defeated. It is ever thus. Set Walpole against Joseph Conrad at a tea fight in the East Sixties and before the *petits fours* are half way down the gathered esophagi, the genius of Hugh will have received fifty votes to one as against the talent of Joe.

§ 4

*The New Chivalry.*—Some recent English knights: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Oswald Stoll, Sir Rider Haggard, Sir Harry Lauder. Let us thank God from whom all blessings flow that this curse has not yet invaded These States. Imagine Sir Mitchell Palmer, Sir David Belasco, Sir Billy Sunday, Sir Harold Bell Wright, Sir Sam Goldfish and Sir Adolph Zukor!

§ 5

*On National Characters.*—The character of a nation, like its mind, is always



determined, not by the masses of its citizens, but by a small minority of resolute and influential men. Nothing, for example, could be more absurd than the common notion that the French, as a people, are fond of military enterprise and hazard. The truth is that they are peace-loving peasants, and have been driven into all of their innumerable wars by their masters, who have always been truculent and daring. The French masses bitterly disapproved of the enterprises of Bonaparte, and resisted his conscriptions by every means within their power. In the late war, as every one now begins to find out, they abandoned themselves to despair after the first few months, and were kept in the fight only with great difficulty. The resolution of France was largely external. That is, it was supplied by England. Internally, it was confined to a very small group of leaders, most of them of the soldier of fortune type.

The characters of the Germans, as they were displayed during the war, were also foreign to the masses of the German people. The Germans are not truculent by nature, nor have they any native talent for organization. Their political history, in fact, shows that they are almost devoid of this talent. The skill and resolution on view on the German side during the war were supplied by less than one per cent of the German people, and so were the harsh, realistic theories which underlay them. The average German was and is quite incapable of any such theories: they horrify him almost as much as they horrify a member of the Lake Mohonk Conference. Once the one per cent of dominating Germans were disposed of, the rest of the nation turned out to be a mob of moony sentimentalists, hot for all the democratic fallacies ever heard of, and eager to put down every man of genuine courage and enterprise. They will continue to pursue these chimeras until a new race of rulers arises—and then the world will once more mistake the ideas of those rulers for the ideas of the average German.

The English are judged just as inaccu-

ately, and in the same way. There is, for example, the common notion that all Englishmen are good sportsmen, generous in victory and calm in defeat. It would be difficult to imagine anything more ridiculous. The English masses are probably the worst sportsmen in the world, save only, perhaps, the American masses. During the war their hysterical whoops and yells deafened the universe, and after it was over the post-armistice elections brilliantly displayed the true colour of their generosity. But there is in England a small minority of men which practises good sportsmanship as a sort of religion, and these men are still influential enough to give the hue of their own character to what appears to be the general English character. Once they succumb to democracy, not even American Anglomaniacs will ever mention English sportsmanship again.

But perhaps the Spaniards suffer under the worst of all these superficial judgments. Thinking of them in terms of their ruling class, the world pictures them as a race of proud and machiavellian Jesuits, extremely reactionary in their ideas, stupendously faithful to a medieval ecclesiasticism, and superbly disdainful of all toil. The actual truth is that the average Spaniard is a Socialist. He is just as machiavellian as the average mule, no more and no less.

## § 6

*The Two Hopes.*—The girl subsequently alleges with tears that the man had given her hope in the matter of marriage. The man subsequently recalls to himself, by way of supporting his self-respect, that the girl in turn had given *him* hope in that she professed elaborately not to desire, but even to disdain, that hope for marriage.

## § 7

*The Reward of Virtue.*—What does it come to in the end? The heroic sweatings and strugglings of the Knights Templar, extending over centuries and for a whole age the marvel of Christen-



dom, are now embalmed in a single essay by James Anthony Froude, M.A. If it were not for that single essay it would be difficult, if not impossible, for any inquirer of English speech to find out what their finish was, and why they perished from the earth. Their old stronghold in London is now—what? An office-building for lawyers, a roost for such shysters as they would have put to the sword at sight. And Palestine, for which they died by the thousand, is now given over to the Jews.

§ 8

*God's Masterpiece.*—The most beautiful thing on earth to me is white clover. It is the only thing I know of that provokes in me a sentimental mood, and that makes me believe in God, Gloria, and cures for neuralgia in the eyeball.

§ 9

*On Women's Intelligence.*—The contention that women are more intelligent than men (a favourite hokum of such amateurs of the sex as Mencken) has never succeeded in exciting me. That the contention sells books, gains for its sponsor many free deviled ham sandwiches and pots of tea flavoured with rum, and achieves for him a fine reputation for sagacity, open-mindedness and chivalry, I—privy to the enviable facts—am not one to deny. But that it is grounded in truth—that seems to me another matter. The truth is that while women as a class are not so intelligent as men, they are, by virtue of their superior histrionic faculties, able, with extraordinary success, to make themselves appear so. It is this histrionism that deceives the amateurs. When a male blockhead and a female blockhead get together, the male blockhead keeps his mouth wide open and permits it to betray the news of his blockheadedness. The female blockhead keeps hers closed, winks sagaciously about nothing, droops a lovely blue eye with an empty, but vastly effective, dubeity, negotiates an impressively inscrutable smile, and thus

leads the eavesdropping menckens to believe that she is fully hep to the foul asininity of the gent.

The platitude that all the good dress-makers and cooks are men, not women, doesn't interest me. That men should succeed over women in such professions as these, which are customarily held to be the especial province of women, has nothing to do with the question of relative intelligence; it assuredly takes no Socrates or Gladstone to make a pretty Peter Thomson or a fine cheese pie: the circumstance that men are better in these fields than women would, indeed, seem to prove that the argument of the amateurs is sound. But, for all the agreeable paradoxes, the fact remains that, save in the single instance of the conflict of sex the best woman is the inferior of the second-best man. Women's intelligence is emotional intelligence: it is showy, appealing, moving, and generally gains its ends; but if this is sound intelligence then every highball is a Bismarck, every hypnotist a Huxley. The woman does not argue with a man's mind, but with his eye and his heart—as an actress, playing a colourful and sympathetic rôle, argues. No woman in the history of the world has yet substituted, in her arguments with the male, facts for nose varnish or sharp philosophy for talc and perfume. Woman is the Jap of the sexes: she is shrewd, clever, wily and, nine times in ten, gets what she goes after. Man is the German.

§ 10

*However.*—Anti-suffrage is based upon the theory that the male American who, after listening to or reading a speech by Woodrow Wilson, votes for Woodrow Wilson, is a more intelligent, more logical and less emotional voter than the female American who refuses to vote for Woodrow Wilson because she doesn't like a man who wears nose glasses.

§ 11

*Poe and Whitman.*—They remain, next to Clemens, the great glories of the



national letters—and each was scorned, during his lifetime, by the professors, and even held up to the younger generation of writers as a horrible example. Imagine the fate of a Yale tutor who had ventured to say a good word for "Leaves of Grass" in 1869! The least penalty that would have overtaken him would have been a ducking under the campus pump.

Poe and Whitman differed from Hawthorne, and even from Emerson and Clemens, in two important particulars. On the one hand, each had courage as well as genius, and was quite content to pursue his lonely way in the face of neglect and contumely. On the other hand, each left an indelible mark upon the literature of his country. Neither, of course, lived and worked in absolute isolation. They had their friends and admirers, and they also had their forerunners. The stories of Poe, despite the current doctrine of the pedagogues, were not actually miracles in a vacuum. On the contrary, they derived from other stories that had gone before them, and often from very bad stories: "The Castle of Otranto," the forgotten thrillers of Ann Radcliffe and "Monk" Lewis, and the German romances from which Lewis in his turn had borrowed most of his *héliogabalisme*. Poe also owed something to a far better man, to wit, E. T. A. Hoffmann—and he was under a debt, too, to Keats, to Shelley, and even to Southey. So with Whitman. There is no need to go further than the Psalms of David to find the origins of his dithyrambic manner, nor than the prose of certain of the Transcendentalists, particularly Thoreau, to discern the natural history of his ideas. . .

But for all that, both of these men were original in the profoundest and truest sense; each passed what reached him from without through the alembic of a vigorous and domineering personality. Each was stupendously egoistical—a man absolutely convinced of his own genius. Above all the literary artists that we have produced they stood clear of the puerilities that immediately surrounded them. Poe, sitting in an office

all day with N. P. Willis, yet managed to write first-rate stuff at night. Whitman, pushed to the wall by swine who regarded Donald G. Mitchell and Edmund Clarence Stedman as great artists, yet stuck to his outlandish notions. Hawthorne had a trace of that courage, but not much more. Emerson and Clemens had none at all. Emerson, after recognizing and praising Whitman, turned tail upon him when the chatauquas of the time began to roar against him. Clemens, as everyone knows, was a huge coward—a man afraid to print his own best books. But Poe and Whitman had steady nerves, despite all their carnalities. They were men who faced an overwhelmingly unfavourable environment, and yet survived. They were egoists who branded the marks of their personalities upon a civilization that disdained them, and that tried its darndest to dispose of them. They deserve respect—and envy. Such two-horned and rambunctious bucks are rare.

#### § 12

*The Green Sickness.*—When a man shows jealousy of a woman it is not always because he fears some other scoundrel is going to steal her from him. He may be, in fact, absolutely sure of her loyalty, and yet greatly resent her promiscuous rolling of the eye. What ails him, in such a case, is a painful œdema of the ego. The which I forthwith explain.

The thing that delights a man, when a woman has yielded to his great love, is the sharp and flattering contrast between her reserve in the presence of other men and her unrestrained ardour in the presence of himself. Here his vanity is enormously tickled. To the world in general she is cold and emotionless; to him she is warm, exigent, fluttering, gurgling, slavish. It is as if some great magnifico male, some inordinate czar or kaiser, should step down from the throne to play pinochle with him behind the door. The greater the contrast between the lady's two fronts the greater his delight. Diminish that contrast ever so



little—by smiling at a moving-picture actor, by saying a word too many to an attentive head-waiter, by holding the hand of the rector of the parish—and at once there is an invasion of the poor fellow's vanity, and he is intensely unhappy, and ready to make a row. This explains many domestic fracas. It is not enough that the wife be properly loving and admiring in camera; she must also be disdainful of masculine charms in public. Here we see why it is that men so often marry what are called "cold" women, *i.e.*, women who never show any open interest in men in general. The colder they are in general, the more flattering their lightest kiss is in particular.

§ 13

*Adv.*—If you would remain a bachelor, read a story in this magazine called "Mamie Carpenter." The technique of Mamie has never yet failed to bag its quarry. We understand that the story is to be used as a text book in Smith, Vassar, Wellesley and other women's colleges. Women's clubs all over the country are pouring in their orders. The newsstand in the Martha Washington Hotel has laid in 2,000 extra copies. The finishing schools up the Hudson and in Connecticut have ordered a total of 10,000 extra copies. The Yale, Harvard, Knickerbocker and Links clubs have attempted to buy up the entire edition and burn it. If you would remain a bachelor, study Mamie's technique—and beware!

§ 14

*Caveat on Sex.*—I find the following

in Theodore Dreiser's "Hey-Rub-a-Dub-Dub":

Does the average strong, successful man confine himself to one woman? Has he ever?

The first question sets an insoluble problem. How are we, in such intimate matters, to say what is the average and what is not the average? But the second question is easily answered, and the answer is, He has. Here Dreiser's curious sexual obsession simply leads him into absurdity. His view of the traffic of the sexes remains the naïve one of an ex-Baptist nymph in Greenwich Village. Does he argue that Otto von Bismarck was not a "strong, successful man"? If not, then let him remember that Bismarck was a strict monogamist—a man full of sin otherwise, but always doggishly faithful to his Johanna. Again, there was Thomas Henry Huxley. Again, there was William Ewart Gladstone. Again, there was Robert Edward Lee. Yet again, there were Robert Schumann, Felix Mendelssohn, Johann Sebastian Bach, Ulysses S. Grant, Andrew Jackson, Louis Pasteur, Martin Luther, Helmuth von Moltke, Stonewall Jackson, Lyof Tolstoi, Robert Browning, Henrik Ibsen (he fell in love, at 60, with a cutie, but fled her as if she were the plague), William T. Sherman, Carl Schurz, old Sam Adams, . . . I could extend the list to columns.

Perhaps I am unfair to Dreiser. His notion of a "strong, successful man" may be, not such a genuinely first-rate fellow as Bismarck or Bach, but such a mere commercial boulder as Shonts, Yerkes or Jim Fisk. If so, he is still wrong. If so, he still runs aground on John D. Rockefeller.





# The Reason

*By Dennison Varr*

HE was a man who seemed to thrive and wax on cosmetics. He was always buying skin lotions, and tooth washes, and shampoo oils. But his principal obsession was hair tonic. Of this he used prodigious quantities, compounded of many varieties of ingredients, and differing from one another considerably in colour, odour and turbidity. In fact, all the brands he used had little in common save that they all contained about forty per cent of alcohol.



# Oh, Pray She Pluck Not Lightly!

*By A. Newberry Choyce*

THERE is a lad in our village  
Whom you would care to see;  
As proud as any wild thing  
That leaps along the lea.

Straight hair he has and clean eyes  
And lips to love a song,  
And fragrant by his heart's track  
The dreams grow sweetly long.

And from a neighbour threshold  
Or from a place you know,  
The small sure feet a maid has  
Will find a path to go.

Oh, pray she pluck not lightly  
Along his holy place!  
I would not have my lad lose  
The God from out his face.





# The Inevitable Eve

*By Edith Chapman*

STANTON'S first impression on entering the apartment was of its emptiness, of its having hastily pulled itself together. There was a smell of closeness, not the usual fragrance with which his cousin contrived to invest every habitat that held her for even the length of twelve hours.

He looked about him scrutinizingly. Everything was in its place. Nothing served to explain that sense of unfamiliarity which still slightly oppressed him.

He felt for his cigarettes and lighted one. It was a long time since he had seen the Creightons. Nina had been consistently neglecting him for some months. Evidently she had felt no need for that "mental stimulus" which, she claimed, he yielded her.

Matters other than intellectual had been absorbing her, from what he had heard. At such crises, she treated their platonic alliance to the preoccupied indifference which he, unreasonably, resented. But why, then, had he been abruptly summoned from the other end of town on a hot August night? What was she doing in town anyway at this time?

On recognizing her voice over the telephone he had felt, for the first time, a faint annoyance mingling with his surprise. After all, it was so far and so hot! To be sure she made pleasant scenery. But he had innumerable, handier resources for decorating his landscape. And to have to listen to Arthur's platitudes for a whole mid-summer's evening!

He frankly loathed Arthur. Complacent, brainless, obese. It made him

almost dislike Nina to be obliged to think of her as the man's wife. How could she have done it?

The maid who had let him in came back with a shaker of Martinis. He discovered, on tasting them, that they were his particular dry kind. Arthur had never had a hand in mixing them. He always succeeded in giving, even to a Martini, a soft, flabby taste. He took the crimp out of everything.

The cocktails relaxed Stanton a bit. He stretched himself in a chair and looked out at the park lake. In the west somewhere the sun was presumably setting, for the water had caught the reflection. A subtle content spread in him. Was it the vermouth; was it a gradual, hardly yet admitted appreciation that on this particular evening he was not to be subjected to the irritant of Creighton's company?

So then the place had been closed? She was merely in town overnight, or something like. But why? What was she up to? His thin lips curled about the amber cigarette holder. Whatever her motives—and the powers defend that he should ever have to keep tab of them!—they two were booked for a pleasant evening, one of their old, delightful, congenial evenings together. He brightened to the prospect.

Nina was a charming woman. He was grateful for whatever chance had brought her to town. And he thanked God also that his part would involve nothing more strenuous than that of pawn. His main surety for this was that, all these years, he never *had* been featured. His relationship with Nina he considered about the most ideal pos-



sible. Nothing exigent or fatiguing. Friendship, simon-pure. What nice hours they had passed together! Ten years back he had begun retailing to her his various adventures, not from any need to confess, but for the sake of that listening look of humour and relish with which her face responded.

What odd confessions she had made to him, too! He had never known a woman so little squeamish about the truth. There was no fact of others or herself—however sordid, however un-beautiful—which, once perceiving, she would decline to admit. Her hawk-look was not for nothing, that cold glint of acumen which never shifted in her large, sensual eyes. . . . Where the devil was she?

She would come in and of course, instantly, draw out the two pins which were all that ever constrained her magnificent hair. This was a favourite trick of hers and, of her many gestures, the most puerile. Yet she never omitted it.

She was vainer of her hair than of anything else. It was almost pathological, her positive compulsion to show it off, even to people like him, who had been thus indulged not less than a hundred times. He could visualize the long, apparently unpremeditated reach of her arms upward to accomplish this manœuvre, on her face meanwhile that foreign expression of intense infantile interest which was in such flagrant contrast to her general inscrutability. For Nina was *not* infantile; she suggested, in no sense, the child.

She was a singularly graceful woman: that way she had of raising her arms, of moving about. And her finesse for perfumes! No crudeness there! He had never known anyone who selected scents more surely, or assimilated them more completely. Within the radius of her presence one couldn't, for all her vagaries, dislike her. . . . How long she kept one waiting!

As he swallowed off his third cocktail he got the tocsin of her arrival, a

singularly aggressive new scent. It upset his speculations. She appeared to him, after his long absence, as immoderately tall and thin and pale.

"I hope you don't mind having dinner with me alone," she asked him. "Arthur is at Lake Forest. I just came down for a couple of days."

"No, I don't mind in the least; politeness forbids me to be more emphatic; but how did you happen to remember me?"

"I came down to see you." She looked at him frankly with her probing, dense gaze. "I got to thinking about you one day last week. I wondered what you were doing. It's so long since we've seen each other. What *are* you doing? The same ugly grind? Why don't you give over such things? You look seedy."

During dinner she retailed to him all sorts of gossip without the least malice and with her inimitable racy, slightly vulgar, *sangfroid*. There was no one like her to wring the humour from a situation down to the last vapour. His laugh broke out more and more often, that choked silent laugh of the academic man. It was as if he disliked committing even his amusement to anything so didactic as expression.

She was very beautiful tonight, for all her attenuation, which the lines of her gown only sought to emphasize. He blessed Arthur for being absent. But why, on this all too short respite—as it must seem to her—was she throwing away one whole evening on *him*? He couldn't explain this point to himself. He reverted to it when they were back in the library.

"How did you come to ask me to-night?"

Above her lighted cigarette, her bland grey eyes shone out at him like two polar, remote stars.

"I told you. I wanted to see you. You seemed to have forgotten me."

"I shan't forget you," he said warmly. "How could I? Aren't we related?"



"Yes, but so tenuously," and an adorable stutter of amusement drowned her last word.

He moved his chair nearer.

"Nina, I ran into Scotty this afternoon."

"Did you?" Then, cryptically, "Scotty and I are off. Besides, I never liked him really. He has no sense of humour."

"What did you expect of an ex-polo player?"

"Nothing."

Her eyes seemed to have permanently settled on him in that unpardonable steadfastness, the temerity of which was one of her great attractions. They reminded him of a cat's, not in any invidious sense, but physiologically. In the same manner within their large green iris the little black dart of a pupil seemed to shift about. They had grown very glossy and compact. He observed how the lids had been darkened and the eyelashes pencilled. This was a new trick. "What did you mean, a minute ago, by saying you wouldn't forget me?"

"That."

"How do you know?"

"Oh, one doesn't forget you. You're too entertaining."

Meanwhile he wondered what her game was, but didn't greatly care.

"Is that my chief interest for you—entertainment?"

"Yes, I think so. Or call it—friendship."

She sighed. "That's what I was afraid of."

"Afraid of what?" He stiffened a little.

"I don't think I like being—an entertainment. I should prefer to be entertained."

"Well, don't I do that for you?"

"Besides," ignoring this, "such a tie is so precarious. If you didn't forget me, these last months, it's only by a miracle. And I don't like trusting to miracles."

She reached out her hand and laid it whimsically on his knee.

He took it and held it a moment,

blinking at it; then he firmly laid it back again. They both laughed.

"What," he inquired, "is the big idea?"

She scowled a little but with no ill-humour.

"It isn't big; rather call it circumscribed. I am curious to know why you've never made love to me. It has really quite worried me. The idea that I might be actually repulsive to you entered my head the other night. I couldn't sleep. I decided to come to town and find out."

During this speech his whole form had grown rigid with unmistakable resentment.

"Did Scotty leave such a vacuum in your life," he brought out brutally, "that you had to resort to me?"

She refused to take offense. "Damn Scotty!"

He watched her stern, subtle face; he noticed that her breathing was straining beneath the tight silk of her gown. Was it possible that she was serious?

"Since we *have* something rather valid, I'd like to keep it, if it's all the same to you."

"And that is?" Her voice could flood with insolence when she liked. One had no comeback against it.

"Our friendship," he offered it lamely, as if no very certain quantity. Indeed, in the last few moments, it had seemed to recede more and more into the region of the purely theoretical. "What's the use of throwing it over, after ten years?"

She didn't answer him, but began to draw steadily at her cigarette. He watched the red tip as long as seemed practicable. Then he spoke. "Well?"

"Oh, all right. Only I wanted to know."

He was utterly bewildered. The situation seemed to have been saved, but whether by him or by her he couldn't determine. What had happened had been too swift for him.

"It has always seemed to me so fantastic," she was saying, "the way, those ten years, we've been going on."

"Or haven't," he amended. He was



by now as cool as she was, with an added hauteur of suspicion.

She laughed softly. "It's rather nice though. We both have our cake and eat it. A kind of permanent feast. Well, it *takes* a philosopher to originate that kind of scheme. However, it's very nice."

He rose. "I'm sure you agree with me that it's really the best possible." He held out his hand.

Her own slid coolly into his, with no reminiscence of its former leaping out. Her look was bland and steady. "Good night; we'll have another feast before too long."

From his hand rose the scent which her touch invariably left. "Why do you use such devilish perfume?" he asked irritably. "I smell like a harem and I hardly touched your hand."

"I'm sorry." Her eyes were very still and bright; in them the pupils seemed to be wheeling about again. He

felt, with a profound amazement, that he had begun to tremble.

Inside his brain one word kept repeating itself. Cake! What had she said about cake? Something about having it and eating it, too. . . .

"After all, why not eat it?" he asked hoarsely.

As his arms closed round her, the wheeling eyes grew still, the lids dropped. Seeing which he instantly let go of her, in fact appeared almost to thrust her off from him. In another minute he had definitely made his exit.

Once down in the vestibule he flicked the powder from his coat-sleeve with vindictive slaps. He was angry to the roots of his self-esteem. As he strode down the street there crossed his mind the inelegant phrase with which one man had described her:

"She's the *damndest* woman I've ever known."



EVERY cynic has his sentimental moments and admits that there is one woman who is different. As always, he is wrong.



WHEN a man praises his wife's good sense it is a sign that he is going to tell her something that will give it an awful strain.



THE chief difference between man and woman is that man hopes and woman remembers.



TO find a liar, look out of the nearest window. To find another, look into the nearest mirror.





# The Girl Who Accepted No Compromise

*By Oscar Lewis*

## I

WE were feeling very well toward the world. Norwick's dinner had been good, his cigars were excellent, and the view from his veranda was undeniably superior. The sunset had mellowed to a cool, limpid twilight. Below us Monterey bay lay like a sheet, its undulating surface unbroken. Only once or twice a year, Norwick assured us, could one see this glassy illusion. The Pacific out there, meddling old dowager, always stepped in after a few hours and put an end to it. She hated repose, the Pacific. He remembered once, though, when the bay had been thus for a solid week; without a ripple—as if someone had spilled a million barrels of oil upon its surface. That, added Norwick, regarding his cigar end, was back in 1913—during the summer when the New Eden colony was established.

We others exchanged interested glances.

During the seven years that had passed since that New Eden affair, none of us had heard Norwick mention the subject. There had been enough said at the time, to be sure, and for months after, by the newspapers and by others, and Norwick's name had been mentioned as often as anyone's. But from Norwick himself there had been nothing but silence.

Was it possible now, we wondered, that Norwick was about to give us his version of the New Eden colony; clear up the secret of his own connection with

it? That part, at least, had always been a mystery. And the Matlin girl—surely she had never been adequately explained! We maintained a sympathetic, expectant silence.

Norwick seemed in no great hurry to start. His eyes dwelt upon the bay's surface. He leaned over and deposited the ash from his cigar in the tray upon the rail of the veranda, then resumed his study of the bay. He drew a deep breath; in anyone but Norwick it would have been termed a sigh. When at last he started talking he plunged at once into the center of things.

"Even now, after seven years," said he, "I'm convinced that the idea behind the movement was sound. They were a group of fanatics, if you care to call them that; I'll not quarrel with you on that score. Certainly they were impractical enough, and all of them, except one, lacked courage—except one, I say. There is no doubt that the Matlin girl was brave."

Norwick hesitated, then started on a new tack.

"The entire group went at the thing wrong, of course; deliberately invited derision and ridicule. There was the name, for instance; the New Eden. What an opportunity for the newspaper humorists! And how little they made of the opportunity; not a single good wheeze, after all their sweating. They did much better work with me. I was the gull who backed the show; the hick who paid Pan while the counterfeit pagans danced. It st have been a good show—from the outside. Perhaps



you will be interested in hearing the truth about it; that is, so far as I can tell you. I hardly know where to begin, though."

"Suppose," said young Rogers, after a silence, "that you start with the—*the Matlin girl.*" His voice, we thought, seemed to be held under a slight tension. "I met her once, eight years ago, for half an hour. She impressed me—a lot. I can't say that I've managed to forget her."

Norwick continued gazing at the bay.

"She is not one," said he, in a dispassionate tone, "who is easily forgotten. One knows her, even casually; she passes on, and a month later one still has a sharp impression of her. A year passes—eight years, and it's the same. There's something almost terrifying about the permanence of her influence. And it's not easily explained. She was not one of those women with blatant, 'powerful personalities,' you'll admit that, Rogers."

"She," said Rogers, "was like a child. One couldn't possibly think of her as mature; casting her first ballot—that sort of thing. She seemed to have a sort of permanent hold on youth; like a goddess. Her face—" Young Rogers broke off abruptly, regarding us with some embarrassment. "Anyhow, she was a deucedly good looking girl!"

Norwick didn't join in the smile that swept around the circle. His eyes remained dwelling upon the bay. That unruffled sheet of water seemed to fascinate him.

"I've told you," he continued, "of the time the bay here was smooth for a week. Seven full days and not a yard of broken water to be seen from end to end. It was during those seven days that the New Eden colony went to smash; broke into a thousand pieces. Gavin Wendell, the High Prophet, you remember, told the newspapers that it was a mere temporary suspension. He knew better; the thing was dead—there was not the remotest possibility of ever re-establishing it. That High Prophet business was another mistake; if Wendell had been called what he really was,

the Chairman of the Board of Trustees — But let that pass.

"The thing, I say, was dead, because the motive force behind it was gone. If you will look into the history of these freak cults you will learn some interesting things. Some day we will have this subject properly treated—if I have to write the book myself! For one thing, there's a dominant personality behind each movement; when it is removed the thing drops like an inverted kite. Dowie, Brigham Young, Mrs. Eddy, Bryanism—extend the list as far as you will. But somewhere in it you will have to include Morgan Matlin."

"It strikes me as appropriate, somehow—that name Morgan," said Rogers. "It always has."

"Perhaps you have never heard," answered Norwick, "that her grandfather was the scientist who carried on the cholera investigations a number of years ago. Morgan's definite media, you know. He was decorated for it in Vienna in 1906, and died there later. Her father taught economics in some university in the South; became addicted to the current brand of radicalism—Socialism, I believe it was—and was hurled out by the regents. He edited labor papers, ran for governor, and left finally, I think, for Trinidad to enroll the asphalt diggers in the One Big Union. Persons who knew him say that he was a wonderfully likable chap. The girl Morgan, I remember, used to speak of him with a sort of affectionate tolerance. I think she was never quite able to forgive his conservatism."

"That gives a hint of the girl's doctrine. Later she changed it somewhat, as we shall see. But at no time did she overcome her abhorrence of half-way measures. No patching up of existing systems (that word 'systems'!) would do; sweep it all away and start again from the beginning. Adam and Eve, she used to say, had started in in an ideal world—what an opportunity! And the reason they had made a mess of things was merely that they lacked background. Today, with a record of six thousand years of blunders behind, the



New Eden could be a thing of permanence. Well, cults have been founded on less logical grounds.

"I was not here the summer the colony was started. When I returned in the fall the thing was already functioning. The land—they had two hundred acres, extending north from that second point—had been negotiated for through my agent. They had rented it for a year with the option of buying.

"The day after I returned the agent called here and cleared himself of any connection with the matter; he had thought it was to be a mere agricultural venture; had no idea of its real character, and so on. He was afraid, though, that I would have trouble getting them off; their lease was legal enough—which, he said, was a shame, for, if the newspapers were to be believed, astonishing things were going on. . . .

"I assured him that I had no intention of interfering. I let the matter rest for a few weeks, skipped most of the newspaper talk, and half the time was not even conscious that they were in the vicinity. They showed no disposition to disturb me. I may in time have forgotten their existence entirely had I not resumed an old practise of mine, that of riding on the beach for an hour before breakfast in the mornings.

"It was in this way that I first met the Matlin girl. We passed down there on the beach. She was walking along slowly, near the water's edge.

"She turned about as I came opposite and waved her hand; called good morning. It was all very natural and unaffected. On my way back a quarter of an hour later she beckoned me to stop. She had found a shell, a thing of rather peculiar design. I told her what I could about it. It interested her, just as most things did, and when I mentioned my collection she was eager to see it. She had seen the Monaco collection; showed an intelligent familiarity with it; had even heard of my own. Imagine that in a twenty-year-old girl! There is no great mystery about her influence; she was merely thoroughbred, a higher development, intrinsically superior.

"The following afternoon she appeared and we spent two hours over my specimen cases, and a day or so later, at her invitation, I visited the colony.

"It is unnecessary to say that the girl from the first moment made a sharp impression on me. I was frankly under the spell of that remarkable something in her personality. Our friendship began then and lasted throughout the two months that the colony remained in existence. Eight weeks. They were—well, among the most interesting of my lifetime. I've not spoken of it until today."

## II

NORWICK relaxed again into his chair and smoked for a moment in silence.

"I had known her two weeks when the—misfortune had its first beginnings, though, of course, I didn't realize it then, or she either, perhaps, until weeks later. It is useless to try to look ahead in such matters. I have no doubt that it was inevitable from the first; insofar as anything may be said to be inevitable. She had a favourite retreat; you can see it from here, dimly, on that second headland, the little cleft near the top. It is completely secluded; one looks straight out to sea between two gnarled cypress.

"We had sat there perhaps for an hour on that afternoon, for the most part without speech; she was not a great talker. Suddenly the winds, the dependable summer trades, stopped. They simply ceased; there was not a breath of air, not a zephyr. The silence was almost startling; we looked at each other. Then in a moment, very distinctly, from somewhere below we heard the sound of a baby crying, a querulous, long-drawn squall. It was an angry, spiteful sound. The wind shut down again and in a moment the familiar roar of the trees was with us once more.

"That crying infant? Well, it was in a squatter's house at the foot of the headland; a Cretian shrimp fisherman. It was a mere shack; I've since had it wiped out, every stick. It was surpris-



ing, the look of irritation that appeared on the Matlin girl's face at the sound of that crying child. She grimaced with distaste; her fastidious hands clasped about her knees, her lips pursed. Then almost brusquely she revived the conversation. In five minutes she was laughing; her eager, stirring self again.

"I have told you that she was unusual; in some basic way she was superior. That moment of irritation, that ruffling of her healthy serenity, remained in my mind, an incongruous touch. She herself referred to it, indirectly, as we climbed down again from the headland.

"I heard it yesterday," she said casually, "for an hour. There was no wind. That wailing seemed—continuous."

"These Cretians," I said. "How they raise their young I don't know. How one in a thousand lives—"

"She had no reply; no shadow of interest in the subject. Uplift, that melancholy diversion, was a blank page to her. She did not scorn the lower orders; to her they simply did not exist within her horizon.

"The very fact that she had allowed herself even to become aware of the child was an incongruity. In her eyes it was a weakness. You see, she had deliberately built walls about herself; all of us do that, I suppose, to some extent. But hers were firm, inelastic. She took life too intensely, that was her trouble. And in order to live she had built her walls. Positively, she had shut out whole sections of life; denied its existence.

"And there was this sick baby, its strident wails forcing itself upon her irritated consciousness. There was something ruthless about that attack upon her complacency; something relentless and brutal. Not for a moment was the issue in doubt from the beginning.

"She continued to go each day to her retreat on the Point. To have stayed away, to have gone elsewhere, would have been an admission of defeat.

"Can you imagine a more preposterous situation? The girl imprisoning herself there each day as an only means of

retaining her complete liberty. I have said that she accepted no half-way measures; no compromise. She had created her horizon, that which lay beyond was not merely of no importance. She went beyond that; it did not exist for her, it simply was not. And day after day she went to the Point. It seemed to me that there was something stupendous about that battle.

"I have told you of the week of complete silence that settled upon the bay. There was not a ripple upon its surface. It was a calm; the wind had stopped. You know, we are unaccustomed to silences here upon the bay, and it grew oppressive. It is useless to say that the Matlin girl was not brave. I have wondered since if I should not have resorted to force; kidnapped her in the old high-handed fashion and locked her away until she could take a rational view of existing things. Instead I argued with her.

"You can drive no bargain with life," I said, descending to platitudes. "She is much too jealous a mistress. You cannot accept her with reservations; she sees to that. Sooner or later you accept all of her."

"The baby down on the beach wailed querulously, seconding my arguments. It was appalling the hold that preposterous child had on life. There was no one who wished it to live. Its mother was dead; its father, out on the bay with his nets, had to row in at midday to give it the food from which it derived strength to continue its scornful challenge throughout the afternoon. The astonishing, superb arrogance of it!

"And up above, the Matlin girl sat looking out to sea. The air was so motionless, so clear, that the strident cries might have come from a spot but a dozen feet distant. Not by a word, a gesture, by no shade of her expression did she admit it was there. To have recognized the palpable fact of the baby would have meant capitulation; a swinging open of the gates to the whole sordid, shut-out pageant. I must repeat again that there was no compromise in her.



"That breathless week was slow in passing. The heat grew very noticeable; in the afternoons it was downright oppressive. That was because there was no wind. Rogers here has said that Morgan Matlin was like a child. She had that quality; it was noticeable then—the puzzled air of a perplexed child among unnoticing, self-centered strangers. I have sat with her through entire afternoons watching the same flat sheet of water and heard the quiet rent by those interminable, arrogant cries. It was not like witnessing a battle; I felt rather the shamed feeling which must come to one who is present at an execution. There was no conversation; I am certain that most of the time she was unaware of my presence."

Norwick paused and suddenly leaned forward and nodded out across the bay.

"See," he said, "over there to the southwest. Look carefully—the wind is coming back."

We could see a distant slight agitation upon the bay's surface; a minute dimming of its mirrored smoothness. This tiny opaque spot traveled northward, widening in area, destroying our illusion of a glass bay.

"The calms seldom last more than a few hours," said Norwick. "In a mo-

ment now we shall have a breeze. It will freshen the atmosphere."

We sat for a time without speech. Rogers shifted in his chair; cleared his throat impatiently.

"You can see," resumed Norwick, "that it was not an even fight. It was not a fair fight. From the beginning the end was obvious. I have said that the Matlin girl was not one to make a bargain with her own convictions. When her decision was made at last, I am sure she did not hesitate five minutes. She entered into the task almost with enthusiasm; within a dozen hours she was gone, had bundled the child north, to the bay region, where the nights were cooler.

"The child, you see, either was none of her business, or it was very much her business. The word compromise had no meaning to her. The fact that she married its father was a natural incidental. She had a logical mind, and a great deal of courage."

The heralded breeze reached us and set up a rustling among the branches of the pines.

Norwick relaxed in his chair, greeting it with an air of relief.

"We have these periods of calm each summer," he said. "They seldom last more than a few hours."



## The Penalty

*By Harold Crawford Stearns*

I SAID: I will not turn to love  
Till I am wise and old,  
For youth must play philanderer  
With quips and cranks and gold.

The years were kind; love hovered near,  
A dainty, tempting prize,  
But when at last I looked at her  
I could not find her eyes.



# Habit

*By T. F. Mitchell*

HE was a sharpshooter. His wife stood on the stage with the glass ball on her head. He remembered how dreadfully he was afraid of her. He thought of all the nagging years, the years she had made a burden to him. He thought how intolerable she had been to him. How easy it would be to aim a little low, he figured. An accident, everybody would say. Slowly he raised the rifle to his shoulder. There was a sharp report and a shout from the audience as the glass ball shattered.



# Fate

*By Le Baron Cooke*

HE went out into the big spaces,  
Espousing new causes,  
Discovering freer forms,  
And prophesying the establishment  
Of unaccepted truths.  
"A Poet of Protest!"  
The world proclaimed,  
And gave him its bay  
For his achievements.

But one day he died,  
(Just after he had completed  
A mighty poem,  
A revolt against mediocrity).  
And they carried him back  
To a sordid little mill town,  
His birthplace,  
And buried him with Masonic honours  
In the graveyard of his people.



THE only really peaceful marriage is the one in which both parties are afraid of each other.



# Never Stretch Your Legs in a Taxi

By S. N. Behrman

## THE CHARACTERS:

A CELEBRATED POET, *fresh from England.*

HIS FRIEND.

THE TAXI-DRIVER.

THE GIRL.

**SCENE:** *The inside of a veteran taxi. The window curtains and seat coverings are frayed and stained. The enamel is peeling from the sides and ceiling.*

THE POET, a tall young man, is slouched in one corner of the cab as if he had been carelessly flung there and hadn't bothered to straighten himself out. He wears a funny round hat pulled down over his eyes—the sort college freshmen wear in this country—and clutches a thick, knobby cane; the cane is the cane of a very old man and the hat is the hat of a very young one. There are times when THE POET looks extremely young and times when he looks very old indeed. His FRIEND tells him that he should never wear the hat and cane simultaneously, but this advice THE POET disregards.

He disregards generally the chatter of his FRIEND. The FRIEND sits in the middle of the seat in a respectable attitude. His legs, not being of an inordinate length like THE POET'S, he keeps decorously on the floor instead of bolstering them against the front panel. THE POET'S eyes are closed: he seems asleep. In the past week he has attended nine teas, four public dinners, seven luncheons, and has read his poems before five literary societies and two universities. But in spite of his fatigue he has the civility to nod at random intervals in his FRIEND'S talk. These nods are intended to convey the impression of attentiveness and they are taken cheerfully by THE POET'S FRIEND in lieu of responses. They encourage the flow of his speech without deflecting uncomfortably the run of his ideas.

Finally, though, he says something which interests THE POET. He has been recalling an anecdote about Shelley—how Shelley came into the dining-room of his house stark-naked from the beach one evening while Mrs. Shelley was entertaining some English ladies. THE POET has heard the anecdote before and only smiles faintly. But a remark of his FRIEND'S on the emptiness of Matthew Arnold's high-sounding sentence about the ineffectuality of Shelley provokes him to speech.



## THE POET

What nonsense that was, wasn't it? Shelley was the most tremendously resolute person who ever lived, wasn't he? The only chap Byron deferred to. Did absolutely everything he believed in—absolutely. "Ineffectual angel" indeed! By the way—does it ever occur to you what a tremendous bore Shelley might have become had he lived to be eighty? What impossible stuff he would likely have written! Look at Wordsworth. Supposing Shelley had lived to be as old as Wordsworth! Terrible to think of, isn't it? Or Keats. . . . It is impossible for a poet to die too young.

## THE FRIEND

You are four years older than Shelley now. . . .

## THE POET

(*Ignoring the suggestion.*) These chaps said all they had to say in the time allotted them. The rest would have been either repetition or reaction. For the purposes of poetry, twenty-five years is sufficient; thirty at most. How wonderful it is for posterity and how wonderful it is for their reputations that Shelley and Keats died so young! What a good thing it would have been for Wordsworth if he'd died young! And for Swinburne. We should have been sure he'd have exceeded Shakespeare.

## THE FRIEND

Now that you have reached the great age of thirty you ought to be thinking of dying. Your poetry has made a unique place for you. Every breath you draw endangers your reputation. And here you are riding around in taxicabs, getting older. Instead of idling about New York, you ought to be completing the arrangements for your funeral. Think of posterity!

## THE POET

I am not so idiotic as to live for posterity. I certainly shan't die for it. If I take to writing unreadable stuff when I'm older and posterity wants to bother its hydra-head about me, so much the worse for it. If I'm ever Poet Lau-

reate—which Heaven forefend!—I tell you what I'll do. When I'm eighty or ninety or thereabouts I'll write an incomprehensible poem in forty cantos. At that age desire is dead and one has time for practical jokes. . . . Forty cantos the thing will be and so profound, so esoteric, so involuted that even I—with the great wisdom I shall have attained by that time—won't have the faintest idea of what it's all about. Then I shall roll up the manuscript—it will have the thickness of a French loaf—seal it and put it away, leaving directions for my son—I shall then have a son who will make his living by writing my life and editing my poems—to unbreak the seal after my funeral. The labour of creating this mastodon will have exhausted my aged frame and I shall forthwith die. While I am being prepared for Westminster Abbey my son will call my publisher on the telephone and tell him in an excited voice that the MS. to which I whispered my last secrets is to be opened right after the show at Westminster. . . . I can picture the scene in the Abbey: the Archbishop of Canterbury reading the service, the King touching a handkerchief to his eye for the benefit of the photographers, and to register his deep feeling for Literature, my son and publisher, impatient for the thing to be over so that they can get back to the mysterious script. I can picture that scene, too: the high, solemn, baronial library, my son, middle-aged and well-fed; the publisher, nervous and excited, hoping the script will weigh enough to make a 12-shilling volume. Everyone is greatly worked up, conscious of taking part in a historic scene. Well, my son takes out the French loaf and begins to read it. As the thing becomes more involved the admiration of the auditors increases. No one admits the thing passes understanding: my son says in solemn tones when he's finished: "This is his greatest work." The publisher nods assent. Right then the tradition is established. The publisher gets a famous professor to write an introduction. The professor doesn't know



what the damned thing is about, but of course he can't admit this to the publisher, so he writes an introduction the opacity of which conceals his bewilderment. The volume creates a furore. Societies are established to interpret it. It becomes a shibboleth of culture. In Chelsea a short-haired girl goes mad trying to fathom it. For centuries the schools and universities foster it. What a lark!

*(The two are laughing heartily now over THE POET's fantasy. But Life, with its usual irony, sends sudden woe to shrivel their hilarity. The plate-glass window below which THE POET has been resting his heavily-booted feet cracks. A branched rift appears in the glass.)*

*(THE TAXI-DRIVER, a short, stubby-nosed, black-haired, florid-faced individual) takes one look at the window and immediately stops the cab. THE POET regards the crack in the window with an interested glance as though admiring its design. He does not remove his legs. The cab is then in Fifty-seventh Street, between Fifth and Seventh avenues.)*

THE FRIEND

*(In a desperate whisper.) Take down your feet.*

THE POET

*(Without stirring.) Window's broken, by Jove! (He stares, fascinated, at the cracked window, like one beholding a miracle.)*

THE CABBY

*(Poking his head through the door of the cab and staring accusingly at THE POET's legs.) It'll cost you ten dollars. A window like that costs ten dollars!*

THE FRIEND

It was the bump back there that cracked the window.

THE CABBY

Bump nothing! It was his legs!

THE POET

A fissure appears in the window and he says it's my legs!

THE FRIEND

It couldn't possibly have been his legs. He was merely resting his legs against that panel. He was, as it were, caressing the partition with his legs.

THE POET

Very piano. Wonderfully light touch. . . .

THE CABBY

*(Brushing aside irrelevancies.)* It was his legs! That glass goes 'way down to the floor, y'see. It costs ten dollars for a glass like that. My boss is a hard man—I got a wife and children— *(He becomes plaintive.)*

THE FRIEND

Why do you have such fragile glass in a public cab? Tell your company it's the bumps that did it.

THE POET

Quite obviously one has a right to stretch one's legs in a cab.

THE CABBY

His leg done it! Ten dollars that window costs.

THE FRIEND

Besides, even if it was his leg that did it, the crack in the window is the result of a hundred previous leg-touchings. Hundreds. Why should he be responsible for the slow attrition to which the window has been subjected by the multitudinous bounders who've been resting their legs against that panel?

THE POET

That's an interesting speculation, isn't it? It's the whole question of responsibility. It is simply impossible to determine where responsibility in any matter begins or ends. *(Turning to THE CABBY with an engaging smile.)* Rather frightens one, doesn't it? Each individual act makes a never-ending ripple in the stream of time. Quite like the indestructibility of matter, isn't it?

THE CABBY

That window costs ten dollars. Your



legs done it. You've got to pay. My wife and children—

THE POET

I insist, however, that I did not break the window. Explain to your boss as follows: If that window was broken by the pressure of my foot against the panel it was not the result of my foot alone, but of the pressure of countless other feet. Surely you can see that. Think of the people you've driven about in this cab. Drunkards, less tender with their feet than I, roisterers. And then the abominable condition of the streets in the last few days, like a Russian village, really. Don't you see that at most my responsibility is only partial? All the others must be sought out and made to pay. An assessment must be made for the damage done by the streets.

THE CABBY

Looker here, young feller, you know damn well I can't chase up every guy I've driven in my cab. Your foot was against that there window. The window broke. A window like that costs ten dollars. . . .

THE FRIEND

We can't argue about this in the middle of the street. There is a young lady waiting for us. Very impatient sort. Drive us to the address I gave you and we'll settle with you.

THE CABBY

All right. But it's ten dollars. My boss is a hard man. My wife and children depend on me. (*Having summed up his case, he climbs back on his seat and starts the cab with a vicious jerk.*)

THE POET

(*Settling back in the seat and replacing his feet below the ruined window.*) What a glorious chap he is! The sort of which generals and martyrs and statesmen are made. Impossible to spin a metaphysical web about him. He's like the old man in Tolstoi who can see nothing but God! His wife and his boss and the ten-dollar win-

dow. It's refreshing, his grasp on reality. How he lets nothing swerve him. . . . One of the most delightful fellows I've met in America, really.

THE FRIEND

Take 'em down. You'll break the other window.

THE POET

I suppose I did break it, didn't I? Of course we shall pay him. It's worth ten dollars to talk to him. How he cleaves to the facts—you can't sway him. Don't give him any money right away. I've thought of a splendid argument for him.

THE FRIEND

We're very late now.

THE POET

I've got to get him interested in the speculative aspect of this thing. . . .

(*The cab has stopped in front of THE GIRL's house. THE CABBY jumps down and opens the door. THE POET lumbers out with his heavy stick and the lighter, more mercurial FRIEND follows nimbly.*)

THE CABBY

Ten dollars for the window. Dollar and a half for the fare. Eleven dollars and a half.

THE FRIEND

Ten dollars is absurd for that window. After all, it's not a stained-glass window!

THE CABBY

It reaches right down to the floor. Call up the glazier's if you don't believe me. You can't get a window like that for less than ten dollars. My boss always pays ten dollars. He's a hard man. My wife and children look to me . . .

THE FRIEND

Refreshing to find a man so devoted to his family.

THE CABBY

My boss owns this cab and he—

THE POET

How is it possible for him to own



this cab? How is it possible for any man to own anything?

THE FRIEND

(To THE CABBY, who is staring at THE POET as if he had gone mad.) You see, my friend is a Communist. He does not recognize the existence of private property. So of course you can't expect him to pay for the window. Tell your boss that; he wouldn't be so unreasonable as to hold you responsible for the theories of your passengers.

THE CABBY

It's my boss's cab!

THE POET

But why? Do you not operate it? Do you not earn the revenue? What does your boss do but sit at home and collect the money you are foolish enough to give him?

THE CABBY

My wife and children—

THE POET

Another presumption. Your wife and children, indeed! What made them yours? By what right do you claim them yours? Surely you have outgrown the mediæval superstition that your wife is your property. She's a free agent, my friend. As for your children—how old are they?

THE CABBY

One's ten, one's nine, one's eight, one's seven—

THE FRIEND

Admirable regularity!

THE POET

It's this sense of ownership I object to. This cab belongs to no one except, in the long run, to the people who made it. They don't own it either because they owe so much to countless other people for the tools they used in making it. Ultimate ownership is like ultimate responsibility, impossible to trace to its sources.

THE CABBY

You're responsible. It was your leg—

THE POET

I see you haven't grasped my point at all. Let me show you precisely what I mean. Let me give you an example. Let us suppose that your wife is unfaithful—

THE CABBY

Looker here, feller, my wife ain't that kind!

THE POET

Naturally. And why should she be, with a charming fellow like you for a husband? But supposing! And supposing that as a result of this lapse from decorum, a child is born. The father, let us say, dies suddenly. Whose duty is it to bring up the child?

THE CABBY

(Interested—he has seen something like that in the movies.) Whose duty! The brat ought to be sent to a foundling asylum.

THE POET

Do you know what foundling asylums are? Have you ever looked into a foundling asylum? Do you realize for a moment the endless burden the child would have to bear because of your barbaric intolerance?

THE FRIEND

He calls the child a brat, though it is yet unborn.

THE POET

Exactly. The whole thing would be your fault. You, I say, would be responsible for the child!

THE CABBY

(Indignant.) My fault! If my wife—!

THE POET

Your fault, certainly. It is your business to keep your wife interested, free from boredom. You gad about the city on a gay job. You have nothing to do but see the sights and listen discreetly to the things that go on inside this cab. You have all the fun of being a man-about-town without any of the expense or the moral and physical de-



terioration that go with that occupation. Men and women appear to you in all their weaknesses; you have, as it were, a chair of philosophy in the school of life. And your wife—what about her? She is bored to distraction, meanwhile, with her domestic duties and the care of the children with which, my friend, you have all too liberally provided her. A man comes along. He is probably, like your wife, doomed to a sedentary occupation: a tailor, say, or a bookkeeper. . . . The child is born. Who is responsible? You, I say. And you would send this child to the foundling asylum; you call it a brat. It's too bad of you, my friend!

## THE CABBY

*(Who has quite lost himself.)* Well, perhaps I wouldn't. . . . *(The sight, though, of the broken window snaps him back to reality.)* That window costs ten dollars. I've got to have ten dollars. My boss is a hard man. It's his cab, and my wife and children—

## THE GIRL

*(Looking out of the window and watching the three men arguing on the curb.)* Oh, dear! They haven't the money to pay the cab fare. How poetic!

## THE POET

I'm afraid you're hopelessly wedded

to your prejudices, my friend. Here's your money.

## THE CABBY

Thanks. I'll see what I can do about my wife—about treating her better, I mean. As soon as I save some money I'll buy a cab and hire a chauffeur. Then I'll have more time with her.

## THE POET

So this is the result of your first lesson in Communism: you want to own a cab. You're as bad as your boss. You're a hard man. *(THE POET stalks inside the vestibule.)*

## THE CABBY

*(To THE FRIEND.)* Say, what's the matter with that boy? He's got wheels in his coco, ain't he?

## THE FRIEND

Yes. He's a poet.

*(At this point, if this were not a street in New York on a March afternoon, the curtain would fall. As it is, THE CABBY drives off toward Fifth Avenue, chuckling at having overcharged his late eccentric passengers five dollars, while THE POET and his FRIEND climb up the stairs to see THE GIRL, who is very grateful for the delay, as it has given her a chance to become familiar with her celebrated visitor's poems.)*



THE modern husband grows soft and humane. There was a man in ancient Rome who pulled his wife's teeth to make a necklace for the parlour-maid.



A COQUETTE is a woman who wears your heart upon her sleeve.





# Mamie Carpenter

By Thyra Samter Winslow

## I

MILLERSVILLE, Missouri, was the usual small town. It boasted, according to the *Millersville Eagle* and the annual leaflet of the Chamber of Commerce, a population of twenty thousand souls. There were, perhaps, ten thousand actual human beings in Millersville, including the farmers within a radius of five miles, the few Italians and Slavs down near the railroad tracks, and the negroes.

Millersville's Main Street extended nearly the full length of the town, footed by the Sulpulpa River and the Union Depot, and headed by the Brick Church. On Main Street were the Grand Hotel—five stories high; the Bon Marché and the New York Store, whose buyers went to New York—or anyhow Chicago—twice each year; the Busy Bee, candy fresh every day, always two kinds of ice cream, with marble topped tables in the back half of it for sodas and ice creams; an assortment of drug stores and cigar stores; garages, still carrying the outward semblance of the stables from which they had sprung; "gents' furnishings," with clerks who copied, in their fashion, the styles in the men's clothing advertisements, always standing near the doors where they could most easily ogle the feminine passerby; groceries displaying the season's best potatoes and onions, with sawdust floors and clerks in white aprons and pencils behind their ears; and two furniture stores with windows brimming with golden oak rockers.

On either side of Main Street, the

streets stretched out in a regular checkerboard, the first blocks of them devoted to the lesser business establishments that had overflowed Main Street, and the remaining blocks given over to residences. The majority of these streets, a few blocks out, were full of neat houses—old houses with mansard roofs and cupolas; new houses in atrocious, too-low bungalow effects, with awful, protruding roofs; simple white cottages, each with its green lawn and over half with a red swing in front and a small, one-car garage in back. Then came a turning into tumbledown negro quarters of the homes of the neighborhood "white trash."

There was a difference in streets, too. Up near the Brick Church the streets were respectable for all their length, the houses were bigger, and the lawns were better cared for. Maple Street, the last to enter Main, was the best of all, turning into Maple Road, later on, when it became even more select until, when it reached Burton Addition—the old Burton farm—it burst forth into a spasm of country homes, a dozen of them, with pretentiously landscaped "grounds."

Each house showed an attempt at grandeur in architecture. Some aped Southern Colonial, with white clapboards or brick; others aimed at English styles, with stucco or half-timber. Each house, too, had a peculiar, inappropriate and ineffectual name; "The Elms," "The Lonesome Pine," "Pleasure," "Crestwood," "Hilltop." Miss Drewsy, of the *Millersville Eagle*, whose rich cousins, the Horns, lived in Maple Street, which gave her social standing, mentioned the names of these houses



in her society column whenever possible.

On the other side of town, toward Union Station and the river, the streets became gradually less pleasing and less important, until, when one reached Gillen Row, the neat houses had given way to gray ramshackle affairs, a bit tipsy as to roof or wall or chimney, with a porch awry, a baluster missing and an occasional broken window patched with papers or rags. These houses were surrounded by gray lawns tufted with weeds, and around them were unpainted picket fences with half of the pickets missing.

Mamie Carpenter lived in Gillen Row, in the least pleasing block of it. Her home was a one-story cottage which had, in its adolescence, showed the spruce yellow and white of a poached egg, but in its senility one could barely see the remains of this glory. The porch which ran across the front sagged. One of the posts was missing. The bottom of the three steps leading up to the porch was loose, the wood breaking into long brown slivers under one's foot. One went directly from the unevenly-floored porch, which held two once-green rockers and a bench of slatted wood, into the living room, papered in what had formerly been gold and green but was now a more fortunate, though dirty, tan.

The living room held a figured red rug, a table and half a dozen unmatched chairs, mostly rockers, of uncertain wood and construction. Back of this was the dining room, with a table and four chairs and a huge, golden oak, mirrored sideboard. Next came a narrow hallway, leading on one side to a dark green kitchen, and, on the other to the small and incomplete bath. Beyond were the two bedrooms, one occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter, who slept in a large bed of yellow wood, with high head and foot board, new when they were married twenty-two years before, and the other, with its iron and brass bed and rickety dresser of imitation mahogany, occupied by their daughter Mamie.

## II

MAMIE CARPENTER was twenty-one. She could have passed for eighteen; she knew it and, when meeting new acquaintances, she often did. She was small and had blonde hair, not white and faded-looking, but real blonde, which needed only an occasional touching up with peroxide to be a lovely, gleaming mass of gold. Her hair was not especially thick nor long, but it waved naturally and Mamie had acquired the knack of doing it high on her head so that it looked pleasantly mussed and fresh.

Her nose was short and well chiseled. Her eyes were round and blue and she penciled them just a little, which gave the necessary accent. Her mouth was perhaps a bit too full, but her complexion was creamy and her cheeks pleasantly pink and plump. She had learned that if you can't afford many clothes, it's better to stick to plain things—if your figure is good enough. Mamie's figure was trim and softly curved, with a roundness that hinted of fat at thirty.

Mamie clerked at the Busy Bee candy store. She had left school in her second year of High School when, after a series of small accidents at the yards, her father, a "railroad man," found himself more frequently out of work than usual.

She had become tired of school, anyhow, but had kept on going until then, partly out of habit and partly because she felt superior to her parents and her neighbours and wanted the further superiority of a higher education. Her mother could do nothing but housework, and that but poorly, and would not consider the indignity of doing menial labor for others, so Mamie, not knowing where to turn at first, and being untrained, went into the overall factory, one of Millersville's few industries. She found the work monotonous and disagreeable. A doctor's reception room and a cashier's cage next claimed her in turn. Both bored her.

Then she heard that the Busy Bee



was enlarging the store and wanted pretty saleswomen. Mamie knew she was pretty. She applied for and got the job and had been there ever since. Mamie daily disproved the theories that, if you give a girl enough candy to eat she soon tires of it, that candy-shop girls do not care for sweets, and that sugar ruins the complexion. She nibbled at chocolates at intervals all day long, and, except that perhaps her cheeks were a bit pinker, her hair a trifle more blonde, she remained just the same.

To the mere buyer of candy, Mamie was one of the pretty, polite little girls in big white aprons who waited on you at the Busy Bee. To her acquaintances and the dwellers in Gillen Row she was old Joe Carpenter's girl, a reproach in itself—rather a wild piece. To Millersville, socially, she was, of course, nothing at all. She did not exist to Millersville's smartest circle except as a purveyor of sweets. She was below even the least important members of the church societies, who occasionally got into the end paragraphs in Miss Drewsy's society column.

Mamie knew how Millersville felt about her, and her liking for Millersville was shaped accordingly. She especially disliked the "society girls," the ones who lived in Maple Road, because they had good times and did the sort of things she would like to have done. They could flirt and not get talked about. The girls in the Busy Bee looked up to them, whispered about them when they came in.

The rest of Millersville Mamie didn't mind, but she despised those girls with a keen, sharp, unbelievable hate. She was better-looking than any of them. She knew that. Society? Good blood? Family? What did they mean, in Millersville?

Mamie scorned Millersville's social pretensions. She knew that in some cities, London and New York, maybe, there was society, real people with generations of good blood back of them, and money and breeding. People like that Mamie could look up to. But she

knew Millersville. In Millersville, what did society amount to? A joke; that's what it was. No one there really came to anything, did anything.

The Elwood Simpsons, the leaders of Millersville society—look at them! There was a little grave in Oakdale Cemetery that Mamie knew all about—and it was closely connected with the girlhood of Mrs. Elwood Simpson—and there were other babies who did not die, but who arrived at equally inopportune times. The Coakleys were one of Millersville's oldest and best families—and Frank Coakley's half-brother spent most of his time in jail, and his other half-brother, Bill, was half-witted, went around with his tongue hanging out and saying silly things. The Binghamms—ugh—they had to get their servants out of town, and, sometimes at the last minute had to break engagements because someone in their third floor would cry and scream—their oldest daughter, some said it was.

Mamie knew other things about Millersville society. The rich Ruckers made their money getting land away from ignorant farmers. The Bilcamps made theirs selling fake oil stocks in Oklahoma. There was some sort of a mis-run bank in the Grantly family. It wouldn't do too closely to look into the histories of any of them. Yet they were "society" and had a Country Club—and lots of good times.

Mamie knew she was as good as any of them—better than most. Her family had moved to Millersville from Lexington when she was thirteen. Her father had got into some sort of a scrape over a woman—or a girl—she had never known much about it, but anyhow, it was enough to make them move. Of course the news of it had seeped to Millersville, made the Carpenters a bit more outcast than they would have been, though they wouldn't have been anything, in any case, without money or connections.

Coming to Millersville hadn't made any difference to Mamie. The new house was just as unpleasant as the old. She had had just as good a time playing



with the boys of the neighbourhood, catching on wagons for rides, in Millersville as in Lexington. She had liked Millersville all right. She had gone to school rather unevenly, staying at home for frequent imaginary ills. But a sense of herself had kept her in school beyond the age of most of her friends.

It was in High School that she had first felt the social barriers of Millersville—and she had sneered at them even as they hurt her. The teachers had all been partial to the two stupid Redding girls, pale-haired, fat and awkward, because Samuel Redding was president of the school board. Their essays had been praised and read aloud in the class. Mamie had known that hers were quite as good and that she was just as clever—and much prettier. But nobody had ever praised or noticed her.

On Friday nights there had been parties, which "the crowd" attended. During the week, eating her lunches in the school lunch-room, echoes of the glories of the parties had reached her—how Marion Smith had let Harold Frederickson put his arm around her, how much salad Louis Bingham had eaten. There had been clubs at school, intimate things with secrets and pins and bows of coloured ribbon; there had been cryptic jokes handed from one member of the selected set to another, to be referred to, giggled over. But Mamie had been out of it all.

There had been other sets, less desirable, the church societies, smaller, less exclusive organizations. Mamie had not been welcomed to these, either, though by a great effort the daughter of old Joe Carpenter might have attained the least of them. She had not wanted to belong. She had not wanted to go with the "society set" of her age, either. It had been more than that. She had wanted them to want *her*. But her father, a ne'er-do-well, had been run out of Lexington, her mother was a slovenly woman with wispy hair, and her home was a gray shamble in Gillen Row.

So Mamie, as she grew up, did not improve her social position. She re-

mained old Joe Carpenter's girl, from Gillen Row.

### III

BUT if society did not recognize Mamie, the masculine element of it did, in a hidden, stealthy way.

Even when she had gone to High School the most desirable boys had offered her—secretly—invitations, moonlight drives—the best people of Millersville did not allow their daughters to drive after sundown with masculine escorts—and other forbidden pleasures. When she was younger Mamie accepted these invitations, but when she grew older and came to the Busy Bee to work, she learned how unpleasant they could be. Gradually, the men had ceased bothering about her. After all, she was only old Carpenter's daughter and not a good sport—no pep to her.

In the Busy Bee, too, had come invitations from the commercial travelers who hung around the Grand Hotel. Mamie accepted them for a while. She wanted a good time. She flirted and laughed, went for walks and drives. But finally she stopped going with the traveling men—refused their invitations altogether. She didn't know why—just no fun any more, nothing to it.

Not that these refusals helped her reputation in Millersville. A girl as pretty as Mamie and coming from such a neighbourhood as Gillen Row and with Joe Carpenter as a father had no reputation to lose.

But when she quit "running around" it left her pretty much alone. She even refused the invitations of the girls who worked with her at the Busy Bee. Their homes were neater than hers. She couldn't return their invitations. Anyhow, she didn't care anything about them. Their beaux, decent clerks, annoyed her. Occasionally, lately, she had allowed Will Remmers, of the New York Store, to take her to some of Millersville's infrequent theatrical performances. She didn't care for Will Remmers, a stupid fellow who thought he was doing her a favour, but, at least, he



was decent—someone to go with. She didn't care for anyone especially. She had learned a lot about men, being pretty and meeting them since she was sixteen.

Mamie had tried to think of some way to get out of Millersville, but she never went far enough to plan anything definitely. The home in Gillen Row took all of her money; she could barely keep out enough to dress decently. She saw no future by the route of the drummers of the Grand Hotel. She had no profession or training. Really, she didn't dislike being in Millersville. If she could have been one of the society set she felt she would have liked it very well indeed. It was just her position that annoyed her—having nothing, no pretty things, being nothing—when girls like the Reddings had so much.

The Reddings especially annoyed Mamie.

There were two Redding girls: Sophie, the older, rather fat and white with colourless hair, and Esther, a bit more presentable, but a trifle more stupid, if anything. The Redding girls giggled, holding their heads on one side. They tossed their light curls. They snuggled up to their young men. They were always coming into the Busy Bee, the head of a little group, laughing and chatting, selecting tables with great care, ordering elaborate sundaes or sodas. They always had new little tricks, new clothes. If they recognized Mamie as one of their old schoolmates, they gave no sign. They had each had a year at the Craig School, a second-rate boarding school that New York maintained for rich Westerners, and liked to forget that they had ever attended any other institution.

When Marlin Embury came into the Busy Bee to make a purchase, Mamie might have paid no attention to him at all if Rosie Martin hadn't nudged her.

"That's William E. Embury's son," she said. "He's back in town. Do you know him? I read in the *Eagle* he's gone in with his father in the business. He goes with Sophie Redding. They say he is going to marry her, though they haven't announced the engagement."

Mamie looked at Embury and liked him. That nice-looking fellow—for Sophie Redding! Not nearly as handsome as the man who had played in the stock company in Millersville the month before, but not bad-looking—didn't compare with Wallace Reid or Francis X. Bushman, but then they were only on the screen—pictures as far as she was concerned, and married—she'd read that in a magazine—and Embury was right here.

She knew who Embury was, had seen him, years ago, before he went away to college, had sort of kept track of him through the papers. She had read, several months before, that he was back in Millersville, after two years as manager of some of his father's oil wells in Oklahoma.

And now he was going with Sophie Redding! Good-looking and rich—the only son of rich parents—and Sophie Redding would get him! He had a good face, was young, couldn't be more than twenty-four. That young kind is easy—falls for anything. Mamie knew that. He had gone to a boys' preparatory school, then to a college that was not co-educational, then two years in a little town. Why—he didn't know anything about girls. He'd be easy even for Sophie Redding to capture—Sophie, with her home, "Crestwood," out in Maple Road, her father, gray-haired and pompous, and her mother, fat and smiling—always giving parties—good times.

No wonder Sophie could get him, even if she was fat and white and silly! Sophie had everything. What chance had she against Sophie?

Until then it hadn't occurred to Mamie that she was entitled to a chance—that there was even the possibility of her and Sophie having aims in the same direction. And yet—

She looked at Embury.

He had bought a huge box of candy. It was being wrapped up for him. He was a nice boy with sleek black hair, not especially tall, but then she herself was small and didn't like tall men. He had nice shoulders, a slim figure, a good



head. Just a boy. Fat Sophie Redding, with her pale eyes and giggles—why, she *knew* she was prettier, smarter than Sophie! And yet—Sophie—!

Why not do something about it? *Do* something? Get Embury? Why not? Wasn't his father about the richest man in Millersville? Wasn't he the most eligible man in town, now that Bliss Bingham had gone to Chicago and Harold Richardson was married?

There were other men, of course, but either they were old bachelors who knew too much about her, old and snobbish, or poor or too young. Embury had already made good in Oklahoma. Now his father had taken him into business, wouldn't disinherit him—if he married her. Wasn't it rumored that Mrs. Embury—stately and dignified enough now—had before her marriage “worked out”? She wouldn't dare object too strenuously to Joe Carpenter's daughter as her daughter-in-law.

After all, Mamie had always wondered if she could do something clever if she had a chance. Here was her chance—she'd never have a better one, she knew that. After all, no one would help her—all she had was herself. Maybe, if she tried hard enough. . . .

Embury took his package and went out of the store. He had not noticed Mamie Carpenter.

#### IV

EMBURY was glad to get home again. He thought Millersville a jolly place to live in after Sorgo, Oklahoma, with its constant smell and feel of oil. He enjoyed his old room again and the new car and being with the crowd.

He was not an especially brilliant fellow, nor a rapid thinker, nor much of a reader. He liked a good time, in a quiet way. He wore good clothes and liked to be with others who did. He thought girls were awfully jolly, but hard to get acquainted with. He found the girls in Millersville unusually pleasant. But, of course, that was as it should be; they were home-town girls.

Sophie Redding—she was jolly and

cute and had a way of making him feel awfully at home. It was pleasant at the Reddings, sitting out on the big porch and drinking lemonade, with Sophie ready to laugh at his jokes and some of the others of the crowd likely to drop in at any time. Yes, Sophie was a pretty fine girl. His folks liked her, too, always awfully glad when he called on her, kept telling him what a fine girl she was and how much they liked the family. Now, if he showed her a good time all summer and autumn, did all he could for her, maybe Sophie would care for him.

Embury was driving down Main Street four or five days later when a pretty girl nodded to him, just a formal, pleasant little nod.

Embury couldn't place her, exactly, but he spoke, of course. He even took his eyes off the road ahead long enough to glance back at her. She was pretty, and he liked little girls who wore plain blue dresses in summer. Someone, probably, he'd met out at the Country Club and didn't remember. Still, she seemed prettier than most of the girls he had met there. Maybe someone he used to know. He tried to conjure up a childhood acquaintance who might have blossomed into this little blonde girl, but he couldn't. Anyhow, she was pretty.

Two weeks later, walking up Elm Street after leaving the office—he frequently walked home and always went that way when he did—the same little figure overtook him, passed ahead. His heart palpitated quite pleasantly. But this time the nod was even cooler, more formal. He returned it as cordially as he could. That night there was a dance at the club and Embury watched each new arrival, but there was no pretty little blonde with big eyes and radiant hair. Sophie found him preoccupied and told him so. He tried his best to be more courteous to her. After all, why worry about a strange girl? You couldn't tell who she might turn out to be.

He saw her again, a week later, when he was driving. Again he received a cool little nod. He'd ask some of the boys about her—she might be good fun



—evidently wasn't one of the crowd. Millersville was a slow place, not much to do, a little affair on the side—by another year he might be married and settled down—might as well have a good time while he could.

He didn't have to ask any of the boys, for the very next day, on Elm Street, the little figure in blue held out her hand as he overtook her.

"I don't believe you know me," she laughed prettily, shyly. "You've looked—so amazed, when I've spoken. Don't tell me your years out of town have made you forget old acquaintances altogether. I'm Mamie Carpenter."

"Why, of course, Miss Carpenter, I'm delighted," he stammered.

"Oh, I'm so ashamed," she said, then hurriedly, with embarrassed little pauses between the words: "Here, I've stopped you to tell you how—how glad Millersville is to have you back—and—I'm afraid you don't remember me, after all. I don't blame you—I was such a little girl when you left—and I'm not—important. But I remember when I went to the Grant School, and you were in High, I used to stop every day and watch you practise football. You wore a red sweater, I remember. You—you were one of my youthful heroes, you see."

He thought, then, that he did remember her, and said so. Little girls change—he knew that. It was pleasant for him to think that, after all these years, she remembered him. He had worn a red sweater—still, wasn't the school colour red; hadn't all the other boys worn them, too? Well, anyhow, he had played football. No one else had said anything about those days. How pretty she was—a wonderful complexion! Why, in comparison, it made Sophie's seem almost pasty. Of course, Sophie was a Redding—that was different—a serious thing, a bully girl, too. Mamie—he liked the name—it was like her, simple, plain, pretty. She might be great fun. To think of her remembering him all these years! What a plain little dress she wore! Poor people, evidently. Oh, well—

Two weeks later, in Elm Street—it was a quiet street, tree-lined—he met Mamie again. She was walking ahead of him, as he turned up from Main. He caught up with her.

"You live near here?" he asked.

She told him, very seriously, that she lived in Gillen Row and that her parents were awfully poor.

"I—I work, you know—in the Busy Bee, the candy store. It makes things a little easier for mother—and my father. I stopped school before my junior year—to—to help them. Of course I've kept up with reading—but—I didn't mind stopping—my father had an accident and they needed me. It isn't bad—it's rather pleasant at the Busy Bee—interesting to watch people."

"I'm sure you're the sweetest thing there," said Embury, and was surprised at his own boldness and a bit ashamed when he saw how Mamie blushed and dropped her eyes. What a dear little thing she was, leaving school to help her folks and not even complaining about it—and not ashamed, either, didn't try to conceal it. It never occurred to him that he probably would have seen her in the Busy Bee any day and so discovered her position for himself.

"You always walk home on Elm Street?" he asked to cover her confusion—she was still blushing.

"Yes, it's so quiet and peaceful, the trees and all."

"That's funny. That's why I go this way, when I don't take the car to the office."

"You do?" Mamie showed great surprise. "Isn't it funny, our tastes in streets?"

Perhaps even more remarkable, if she had mentioned it, would have been the fact that Mamie had never honoured Elm Street with her presence until—investigating by little scurries after leaving the shop in the evening—she had found that Embury usually chose it when walking home.

## V

Two days later, Embury walked up Elm Street with Mamie again. He had



looked for her the day before, and had been disappointed when he did not see her. Hadn't she said she walked there every day?

"I didn't see you yesterday," he said with a smile, as he joined her.

Mamie explained—not the real fact, that she had taken her old route home so as not to appear too eager for his acquaintance—but that she had gone a shorter way so that she could hurry home to cook dinner—her mother wasn't well.

"Poor little girl," thought Embury, "working all day and then cooking dinner at night, too."

"I missed you," he said.

Mamie blushed again. She was rather good at it. Many people are.

"Are you going to stay here in Millersville?" Mamie asked.

No use getting excited, working hard over him, if he wasn't. Embury was the first real opportunity she had had—if she could only get him before the others poisoned his mind against her or before the Reddings made his escape impossible—if he were going to leave Millersville, there wouldn't be any use bothering about him.

Embury told her that he was to stay in town, and she showed pleasure and blushed again. She asked him about his work and his plans.

To his surprise, Embury found himself telling her about himself. Here was a girl, intelligent, interesting. The other girls didn't know anything about business. But, of course, thrown on her own resources as she had been, she'd learned to take a real interest in the business world.

They walked together until a block before the street down which Embury usually turned.

"I go this way," said Mamie.

She could have continued on Elm Street, but she thought it best to be the first to break their walk together.

"Wait a minute; don't go away so quickly," said Embury.

He felt as if he were on a delightful adventure.

Quietly, Mamie waited.

"When am I going to see you again?" he asked.

She started to say something, blushed, then: "Why, I don't know—I mean, any evening, walking home this way. I'm at the Busy Bee all day, you know."

"At night. Can't I call? Can't you go for a drive?"

Mamie knew how her home would look to Embury, the porch with its sagging floor, the living-room with its clutter of ugly chairs, her parents quarreling, more than likely. She couldn't receive him at home. It didn't seem fair—she had to fight against so many odds—and Sophie Redding had the whole Redding home, with its great porches, its big living rooms for entertaining. How she hated Sophie Redding with her giggles, her light stringy hair. Still, if she were smart enough—there might be ways . . .

"I'm afraid I can't let you call at all," she said, modestly. "You see, I'm not one of the society girls. It—it wouldn't look right, I'm afraid. You know how—how careful a girl has got to be."

What a dear little thing she was! Modest and shy and good. Each second Embury felt himself more and more a man of the world. This little thing, so fragile and dainty—and awfully pretty. Of course she was right. People would talk—and yet. . . .

He didn't know that Millersville would not talk about Mamie, no matter how many men called on her, that they had talked when she was a little girl and di missed her, carelessly, as "Joe Carpenter's daughter, a bad egg." Mamie knew. It didn't make her feel any happier. Still, this was no time to worry about it.

"Couldn't we go for a ride some evening?" he asked. "No one would see us, honestly they wouldn't."

"I couldn't. Really. You know how it is. I'd love to—but—it wouldn't be right. I can't go."

She appeared to want to yield to him. She knew how society in Millersville regarded girls who went automobiling with young men, alone. Embury would find out, if he didn't know already, and



his opinions would be molded by the others.

"You're the funniest girl I ever saw," he smiled at her.

She was just small enough so that he looked down into her face when he stood close to her. Embury liked little girls. He was glad Mamie was small.

"Other girls would go with me, honestly they would."

"You'd better take them, then," she pouted, prettily.

"I don't mean that. I don't want to sound conceited. Only I would like to take you, honestly I would. I know a little road house, 'Under Two Flags,' where they make awfully good things to eat, French cooking. We could ride out there some night, if you'll go."

Mamie knew the road house. She used to think it great fun. She had slapped the faces of six commercial travelers driving home from it and finally had given it up as a dangerous place. It was, nevertheless, a fairly decent resort, with only a slightly sporty reputation, but, after all, the ride there and the supper weren't worth the trouble of keeping her escort in his place all the way back. Why did men expect such big rewards for a ride and a bit to eat?

Mamie smiled wistfully.

"I'm afraid not," she said. "I wish you wouldn't—tempt me so. You see, I never go driving—I—I don't have many good times."

Embury's conscience hurt him. She was such a dear. Of course she shouldn't go. He felt more wicked than ever.

"But look here," he said, "can't I see you at all?"

Mamie was thoughtful.

"I don't know," she said; then, "Next Friday I have a holiday—I work every second Sunday, the Busy Bee is open on Sundays too."

Embury was supposed to be at the office every day but he knew he was not indispensable.

"Fine," he told her, "that's awfully good. Can we go in my car and make a picnic of it?"

Mamie thought that would be a lot of fun. They made plans for the meeting. That was Wednesday. On Thursday, Mamie avoided Elm Street.

## VI

FRIDAY she was a few minutes late. She had appointed the corner of Elm and East streets as the meeting place. From a distance she saw Embury's car waiting at the curb near the corner. He sprang out when he saw her.

"This is jolly," he said.

She looked charming and she knew it. She had on a thin little dress of white, flecked with little rosebuds. It was plain and not new, but very fresh. A floppy leghorn hat was tied under her chin with a pale pink and yellow ribbon. She had trimmed the hat, herself, after a picture she had seen in a copy of *Vogue* that someone had left in the Busy Bee. She knew it suited her. The night before she had had a quarrel with her father because she had not "turned in" enough money. She had purchased a tiny bottle of her favorite perfume, rather an expensive brand.

It was a perfect day, not too warm nor too sunny. Mamie did not snuggle close, as she felt Sophie would have done. She did not talk too much. But she took off her hat and let the wind blow her hair back—she had washed it the night before and it blew in soft waves. She sat near enough for Embury to smell the perfume of it.

They drove to a small nearby town where Embury attended to some business his father had asked him to look after the week before. At noon he suggested eating in the town's one hotel. Mamie shuddered prettily, then had an idea.

"Can't we have a picnic—a real out-of-doors picnic?" she begged. "I'm shut away from the sunshine so much of the time."

Embury thought the idea delightful. With much laughter, they bought things at the little stores, bread and pickles and olives, tinned meats and cakes and a piece of ice in a bucket and lemons and



sugar for lemonade. They rode, then, until a bit of woods attracted them. They soon had the improvised luncheon spread out under a tree.

Embury was surprised at his enjoyment. He watched Mamie's little white hands arranging the things to eat. He tramped to a nearby farm for water and returned with an extra pail containing fresh, cool milk. It all seemed decidedly pure and rural to him. The food tasted remarkably good and, when they had finished, he leaned against a tree and smoked, smiled as he looked at Mamie, still cool in the sprigged lawn.

"Having a good time?" he asked.

"Wonderful," she told him, "this is the best time I've ever had, I think. It's different. You're not like the other men I've known. I can—talk to you, tell you things. This seems sort of—of a magic day."

Embury thought so, too. He told her so. He told her other things, about his business, his thoughts, what he was going to do. Finally, he was telling her about his two years in Oklahoma.

"That was prison," he said. "It was smoky and oily—you could feel the oil, taste it in your food. It hung over you, all day, like a cloud. Still, it was worth going through—for this."

"You are—nice," said Mamie, very softly.

"Let's keep this day for a secret," she said. "Just the two of us will know about it. Let's keep all of our times together as secrets—if we ever see each other again."

Embury agreed that secrets were very nice things to have.

They were silent for a while.

Finally, he got up, walked over to her. Mamie got to her feet, too. He came close and put his hand on her shoulder, started to put his arms around her.

"You're a dear little girl," he said.

Mamie lifted big eyes to him.

"Please don't," she moved away, ever so slightly. "Please let me keep today perfect—as a memory. We—may never see each other again. I want to remember today as it is now. I—"

She broke off, embarrassed. Embury

felt suddenly bad, ashamed. How innocent she was! If he were going to be a man of the world, he'd have to think of another way. He couldn't break the silken wings of her innocence by spoiling her day—her perfect day—she worked so hard and was so good. It had been a pleasant day for him, too. Later—he could see her other times, of course.

"I wanted to make the day more beautiful," he said, but he did not try to touch her again.

They rode home almost in silence. When she told him good-bye, in Elm Street, she let her hand lie in his a moment. How small it seemed. Why, actually, it trembled.

"When am I going to see you again?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Mamie. Then, "I walk up Elm Street every day, you know. I—I had a wonderful time." She smiled a bit sadly, and was gone.

That night there was a party at the Country Club and Embury took Sophie Redding.

For the first time since he knew her he noticed how fat her hands were, a trifle red, too—and how she took possession of him, as if they were already married—and he'd never proposed to her. She giggled too much. It made him nervous. He knew a dainty, pretty girl, a simple little girl, who didn't go to Country Club dances nor roll her eyes nor put her hands on fellows' shoulders. Of course, Sophie was the sort of girl that a fellow married—position and all that—his mother kept hinting things—what a fine family the Reddings were, what a nice wife Sophie would make. . . .

Still, he was young yet. Too young to settle down. He'd have his fling first, anyhow.

## VII

For five days Embury walked home on Elm Street. He did not see Mamie. On the sixth day he went into the Busy Bee. There she was, her blonde hair more golden and beautiful than ever.



She smiled a quick greeting at him. He had been afraid to go in, ashamed almost. What if it would embarrass her—what if she didn't want to see him? Of course, he wasn't going in to see her—he really had a purchase to make, still . . .

Should he let her wait on him or get someone else? He saw her speak to another girl. Then she walked back of the counter to meet him.

"Hello," she said, very low but gayly.

"How have you been?" he asked. "I haven't seen you for days."

She laughed.

"It's good of you to bother. My mother has been ill again. I wasn't down at all yesterday. You wanted to buy some candy? May—I wait on you?"

She was modest, didn't think he had come in especially to see her. He bought a box of chocolates and took it away under his arm.

That evening he met her in Elm Street.

"The candy is for you," he told her.

She accepted it, with as seeming a gratitude, as if she didn't get all the candy she could eat all day long.

"You bought my favourite chocolates," she told him. "I wondered—"

She broke off, blushing.

"Who were they for?"

"I—I mean I didn't think they were for me. You know how girls in—in stores gossip. I heard—someone said that you were attentive to—I mean that you liked—someone here in Millersville."

"I do," said Embury boldly, and caught her eye.

She blushed again, prettily.

"It was Miss Redding they meant," she said.

So—people were saying things about him and Sophie Redding. Embury didn't like it. He was too young to get married. He felt that. That's the trouble with a small town, no sooner you start going with a girl than the town has you engaged and married. Mrs. Redding, too—she was being too nice to him—too affectionate.

"Miss Redding is an awfully nice

girl," he told her. "We've been to a few parties together, but that's all. You know how Millersville is."

"I know. I went to High School with the Redding girls. They're just a few years older than I am. I'm sorry I said anything. I guess I just listened to gossip. You know how you hear things. Just to show how wrong people can be—why, what I heard was that—that Miss Redding herself had said that you were—were going together. Millersville is awfully gossipy, isn't it?"

So, Sophie had been talking about his going with her. But it was just the thing she would do. A few weeks ago he had felt that if he could win Sophie it would be a very desirable thing. But lately he'd been annoyed at her. She'd shown him too many attentions—or too many pointed slights to pique him. He felt himself falling into a sort of net that she was spreading. Why, even this little girl, so far away from the set in which Sophie moved, had heard things. He'd be careful—he wasn't engaged to Sophie, yet.

He admitted that Millersville was gossipy but that there was "nothing to" the gossip about him. He and Mamie had a pleasant walk up Elm Street.

After that, for several weeks, he met Mamie every day. He tried to make other engagements, but she wouldn't go for picnics or drives, even on her days off. She told Embury that she had to help her mother, who wasn't strong and needed her. But she consented to the evening walks home.

How sweet and simple she was, Embury felt. Other girls would have playfully avoided him, teased him, tried to make him more eager by their indifference. Mamie was always admittedly glad to be with him. Excepting when she had to hurry home a shorter way, she was always walking up the street when he overtook her. He began to look forward to these little walks, down the quiet, tree-shaded way. Mamie, on the warmest days seemed to remain cool and fresh-looking, her blonde hair soft and fluffy. In the shade she would take off her hat and turn her face up to catch



any stray breeze. She'd have jolly little stories to tell him and be interested in everything that he was doing.

Walking next to her he could watch the soft curve of her body, smell the pleasant fragrance of the perfume she used. Later, when he was alone, he contrasted her; gentle of voice, sweet, simple, sensible; with Sophie and Esther, the other girls of the crowd, their giggles and affectations, their attempts at intimacies, pressing close to him while they danced, overheated after dancing, their hair moist, their voices loud, their behaviour foolish. This little girl had more refinement than any of them—knew how to keep her self-respect, too. These walks were the pleasantest part of his day.

Then, one evening Mamie was standing at the corner of Elm and East Street waiting for him, her eyes wide and frightened. From a distance he had seen her dainty figure, the plain straw hat, the simple frock.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"It's really nothing," she said, but her eyes held tears.

"Tell me. Is it serious?"

"It's nothing. That is, you'll think it's nothing at all. I—I can't tell you. It—spoils things—our little walks, our pleasant friendship."

"What do you mean?"

"It's awful—Millersville. I hate it—. People misunderstand. I'm poor, you know—and work. It's so easy for people to talk about a girl in my position. And someone told my—my father that I meet you every evening. He—he grew awfully angry. You don't know my father—he has a terrible temper. I—I can't ever meet you any more. That's all."

She wiped her eyes carefully, with her small handkerchief. "Of course—it's nothing to you, but it's meant so much—I'm silly, I guess, but it's been the pleasant part of—of my life." She sniffled, very gently.

"My dear, my dear," Embury was moved. He wanted to take her into his arms. Such a little girl—talked about—because she went walking with him! He

danced with other girls, put his arms around them on porches, kissed them, even. And this little girl—walked with him—and even that was denied her.

Suddenly, it came to him how much the walks meant—how much Mamie meant to him. Each day he told her everything he had done, talked over his small business difficulties with her. She was always asking such sensible, thoughtful questions about things. None of the other girls cared—all they cared was that he was old man Embury's son—good as an escort—or to bring candy or flowers. He had never taken Mamie any place, nor spent money on her. She seemed apart from things—their little walks up the quiet street seemed to belong to another world.

"It's nonsense," he said. "I won't stand it. It's ridiculous. Of course we can keep on seeing each other."

"I'm afraid not," her voice was unsteady.

"But we must. Don't you care?"

"I—I—told you—I don't dare think how lonely I'll be. Thinking about our talks has helped me all day long."

Mamie wouldn't let Embury call on her, either. Not just yet—maybe later, when her father was no longer angry. She didn't dare disobey him, he was rather cross, almost cruel to her.

They walked the rest of the way in silence. At her street Mamie held out her hand and Embury took it and held it. It seemed a very solemn occasion.

Mamie's expression was not so sad as she turned down the side street. It was decidedly pleasant and smiling. It might have puzzled Embury if he had seen it, but not more than the conversation would have puzzled Joe Carpenter. For, not since Mamie was ten had her father tried to give her advice concerning her associates. No one ever came to him with tales of Mamie and he had never even heard that the rich Mr. Embury had a son.

## VIII

For weeks, then, Embury didn't see Mamie. At first he dismissed the whole



thing with a careless, "Well, that little affair is over," a slight disappointment that Mamie hadn't been a better sport. It was just as well—. Someone had told his parents, too, and they had questioned him, rather teasingly, about the companion of his evening walks. But they had been serious, at that. They didn't want him to get "mixed up" with anyone.

Then he began to miss Mamie, miss the chance to talk about himself, miss her soft femininity. To put her out of his mind he devoted himself more thoroughly to Sophie.

After all, she was the girl for him, one of the Redding girls, one of his own class. But when he talked to her he couldn't help comparing her to Mamie, whom he felt he knew very well. Mamie was fresh and wholesome and innocent. She never went to parties or dances, things like that. Sophie was full of little tricks, liked to say things with double meanings—and giggle. If the girls had been changed around—Sophie in Mamie's place—he couldn't quite understand it.

Sophie became too affectionate when he was with her, begged to light his cigarettes, always putting her hands on his shoulders, pinching his arm when anything exciting happened—and then pretending she hadn't meant to do it. She was an awfully nice girl, of course. But she so definitely pursued him. He got tired of hearing her praises sung at home, too. Her tricks of breaking engagements, pretending indifference—they were worse than her affectionate moods. Her hair was colourless, her eyes too light. Compared with Mamie . . .

As the days passed he missed Mamie more and more. He hated himself for his stupidity—he found himself passing the Busy Bee on all possible occasions, looking into the windows, over the display of assorted candy, into the store. Sometimes, above the counters, he'd see her, in her crisp white apron, her blonde, radiant hair framing her lovely little face. She was always busy, always cheerful. Other girls wasted their lives

having good times. Mamie worked on, day after day—gentle, good. Sometimes Embury thought her face looked serious, a bit sad. Did she miss him?

Finally he couldn't stand it any longer. He cursed himself for his silliness—he went into the Busy Bee, bought some candy. He had promised himself he wouldn't annoy her—she was right—it was better that they shouldn't see each other any more. Yet he was shedding the dignity of an Embury, acting the mere oaf, hanging around a candy store hoping for a smile from a salesgirl. He should have known better, scorned such behaviour. But there he was.

Mamie was busy. He waited—someone called to her and she went into the back of the shop. He felt like a fool—didn't dare ask for her. He bought his candy and went out. Next day he passed the shop three times. The day after he went inside again. He watched Mamie's slim fingers flying among the candy trays, putting chocolates into a box for a customer. How he loved her hands. They were too fine for such work. Why—he did love her—of course—that was it—he loved her—no use denying it.

He looked at her—her lovely profile, her fair complexion. She turned—smiled at him, rather a sad little smile—and went on packing chocolates, an adorable colour surging over her face. She had to pack chocolates—his girl! He loved her—and couldn't even walk down the street with her. He made a purchase and went out, hating himself the rest of the day.

He took the candy out to the Reddings that evening. Ten or twelve of the crowd were there. They turned on the Victrola and danced, then had lemonade. Everyone was in high spirits. Someone suggested a short drive to cool off after the dancing, so they all piled into the cars that stood waiting for them along Maple Road. Embury drove his car and Sophie sat next to him.

"Propose to her," something told him. "Go on, get definitely attached, have it



over with. Then you'll be settled, nothing to worry about. No use thinking about Mamie—you can't marry her."

But he couldn't propose, then nor later, when he was alone with her. Sophie chattered. The soft, pleasant night seemed marred. He thought of Mamie, their one ride together. He was sick of Sophie, of her tricks, her silliness, his parents' praise of her. He wanted Mamie.

He thought about Mamie before he fell asleep that night. He did love her. He knew that. But he couldn't marry her. Of course not. If he did, though, his father would be horribly disappointed. But he'd get over it—and his mother, too. It wasn't that. Mamie was far prettier and sweeter than any girl in the crowd. But she didn't belong—it was just that she lived in Gillen Row. The crowd would laugh at him.

What if they did laugh? Oh, well, it was something. He didn't want to hurt his future. Mamie was in another set—another world—that was all. He couldn't marry her. Still—he could see her. There were other things beside marriage. He had to have his fling. He hadn't had any affairs. He was still young. Here was an affair, that was all. After that—you can settle such things with money—there was time enough for marriage, then—with Sophie, of course.

He woke up feeling quite the conquering hero, as if he had already taken definite steps in his approach on Mamie. She was a dear, a little innocent. He was a college man, a man of the world. Of course she was no match for him. Still—he'd be a fool not to follow the thing up—she was too pretty to leave—if not him, someone else then. Why not him?

At noon, when he left the office in his car, he drove up Gillen Row. What a street! There had been no rain for days—everything was covered with gray dust. There was a horrible sense of rust and decay and dirtiness. He didn't know which house was Mamie's, but they all looked alike in the sunshine, a squalid, ramshackle row—how differ-

ent from his own home—from the Redding home, with their terraced lawns, their pleasant green bushes and flowers. This was a different life from the life he led, from the pleasant, comfortable ways of his people. And yet—Mamie—

## IX

At half-past five he went into the Busy Bee. Mamie was not busy. She was standing near a glass counter, listlessly leaning one elbow against it. She looked pale, he thought, and yet dainty—dainty and sweet, and she'd come out of Gillen Row. It had been a hot summer. He was glad September was here.

She smiled as she saw him. How little she was! Hadn't she missed him at all? She had cared a little for him—he felt that. He could make her care again, if she'd give him a chance.

"I must see you," he told her.

She looked around, rather frightened. He had forgotten that she had to be careful about her position—that she actually was forced to sell candy in the Busy Bee.

"Don't you want to see me?" he added.

"Of course."

"You won't meet me in Elm Street?"

"I don't dare. I told you. You don't understand—I—I can't meet you."

"May I come to see you?"

"I—I told you—"

"But I *must* see you. Let me call."

"I don't—well, all right then, if you want to come. I shouldn't let you. My father—still, if you want to. I live way down in Gillen Row. We are—are very poor, you know. If you want—"

"Of course I do. Why didn't you let me come, before? May I come right away, tonight?"

She nodded.

"Where do you live?"

"The third house after Hill Street, Number 530. It's a little cottage."

"Go driving with me?"

"I—I told you I couldn't—at night—and I never have time, other times."

"Tonight then, about eight. How's that?"



Mamie nodded again, smiled. Embury bought a box of candy to cover his embarrassment.

Going into a candy shop to make an engagement with a shopgirl—trembling when she spoke to him, grinning and ogling over the counter! He had never thought himself capable of that.

As he ate his dinner the engagement became something a bit different, a bit devilish. He'd take her out in his car. Of course. It would be a moonlight night. A simple girl like that—

# X

A FEW minutes before eight he drove up to the cottage where Mamie lived. It was even more terrible than he had imagined it, a crooked little cottage with a funny, sagging porch, the paint peeled off, the lumber turned gray. There had been no attempt to beautify the small gray yard.

As he was stepping out of the car Mamie came out on the porch, walked hurriedly toward him. She had on pink, a thin, delicate pink, made very plain. Her complexion looked quite pale, her hair softer and brighter than ever.

She came up to him, put her hand on his arm, drew it back again. The gesture that had been affectation with Sophie became genuine embarrassment here.

"You—can't—call," she said nervously. "I told father at dinner. He's just stepped out. He'd get furious—if he found you here. He—he keeps harping on what that man told him—about my being seen with you—he says—I'm not in your class—that you don't mean—aren't—that I shouldn't go with you."

He saw that she was trembling. How soft she was and little! He wouldn't be cheated out of a ride with her—this evening—hadn't seen her for a long, long time. How he'd missed her!

"Jump in the car," he said. "Hurry up, before your father gets back. He'll never know."

"I can't. You don't know how angry he'd be. Girls don't ride at night, in Millersville. It will make things worse."

She drew back.

"You don't want to go?"

"Oh, I do, I do! You don't know how much."

"Then jump in."

"It wouldn't be right. You wouldn't respect me. Other girls—"

"My dear child, you don't know the world. Other girls go driving at night—and do worse things than that. Only night before last I took a girl out driving—Sophie Redding—Miss Redding and I—"

"I know, but she's—you know—I told you what I heard."

"There's no truth in that. I told you so. Now come on, be a nice girl, jump in. It's too perfect an evening to waste. We'll drive down Rock Road. No one will see us."

"I don't know—I—"

"Please come, You'll please me, won't you?"

He felt bold, masterful, put his hand on her arm. He saw he had done the wrong thing, been too hasty. She drew away, frightened.

"I—maybe—I'd better not see you any more, ever. That's what I'd planned—"

"Please come on, won't you, dear? Don't talk like that. Come on."

He let his voice grow tender—he was surprised to find how much he meant the tenderness. What if she wouldn't go?

She hesitated a moment, then:

"All right," she nodded, and jumped into the car.

She had ordered her parents to keep away from the front of the house, but she knew them. She was eager to get away before they peered out of the window or slouched out on the porch.

They left Gillen Row and were soon out in the country.

Mamie sighed, a pleasant sigh of happiness.

"I suppose I oughtn't be here," she said. "It's wrong, I know, but it seems right when I'm with you. I've been so lonely lately. It seems wonderful."

"You've missed me a little, then?"

"Missed you—of course."



The moon came out. They drove along the Sulpulpa River, and the moon rippled a path on the water. Embury stopped the car.

"This is great, isn't it?" he asked.

"Wonderful. I almost lose my breath at it. I'm that way about scenery—I can't say much. And to be here, now—"

He looked at her. She seemed almost ethereal in the moonlight, the pale pink of her dress, the soft gleam of her hair.

He put his arm around her, very gently, drew her close to him, held up her chin, looked at her. She was lovely, her fragrant, soft complexion, her big eyes. He kissed her.

She gave a little gasp. But there was no pulling away, none of the "how-dare-yous" which he had feared. As simply as a child she put her arms around his neck, kissed him, gave little whispers of contentment.

"You dear, you dear!" Embury whispered over and over again.

Then she drew away from him, turned her back, broke into a paroxysm of sobbing.

"What's the matter?" Embury asked, genuinely perplexed.

He hadn't quite understood her kissing him, though the kisses had been very pleasant. He understood her now least of all.

"I—I shouldn't have come with you," she sobbed. "Don't you see—I—I let you kiss me—I kissed you—I wanted to kiss you—I'm as much to blame as you—more. It's wrong. I shouldn't have come with you—now, you can't respect me any more. After this you'll think—"

"Now, now," he soothed, "don't carry on this way. Honest, it's all right. It really is. Of course I respect you, honey. You're the dearest little girl I know. Why—I—love you!"

He stumbled over the word—he had never told a girl that he loved her, before. He was quite sincere, now. Marriage—of course that was different. He knew that. But this little girl—she was a dear—lovely, as she lay in his arms, soft and yielding, her lips against his.

Still, now he wanted her to stop crying—he had made her cry—

"Why, dear, kisses aren't anything, really. Lots of girls—. You don't know the ways of the world, that's all. Now cheer up—I didn't mean to frighten you."

"It—it was all my fault. I shouldn't have come. Of course, when I came, you thought—and I—I *wanted* to kiss you. That's the worst of it. Only—I did want to come—I never have anything. I'm—only nothing at all—and live in Gillen Row and you're Marlin Embury—and now—I've kissed you."

He drove her home. All the way home she sobbed softly. There was a light in the little cottage.

"Don't drive me to the house," she said. "Father's home—it's late—if he saw you—I don't know what he'd do. I'll be all right—if I go in alone. My mother will be waiting, too. She'll keep him from being too angry—if I explain to her. I—I think she'll understand."

He let her out at the corner, pressing her hand as he told her good-bye.

"Now don't you worry," he said. "I'll see you tomorrow, dear. A kiss is nothing to worry over, really it isn't."

She watched his car as he drove away, sent a tiny little wave of farewell to him as he looked back.

Her mother had gone to bed. Her father was playing cards with three cronies in the dining-room.

"That's right, come trailing in at all hours—running around with someone else—got someone new?" he growled, as she passed them.

"That's my business," she answered curtly.

Her father might have detected a new tone in her voice if he hadn't been too busy seeing that he got the best of his friends before they took advantage of him.

## XII

EMBURY worried about the kisses pretty much that night after he got home.

After all, Mamie was such a little thing



and awfully young, not more than eighteen, probably, and not worldly, sophisticated, like the girls he went with. He oughtn't to have—well, taken advantage of her. She had said she would never see him again—and then, after he had said he'd see her tomorrow, he had seen her wave farewell. If he didn't see her—perhaps that would be best, after all. Still—her kisses were sweet—she was a dear—he remembered the touch of her soft lips.

In the morning Embury still thought only of Mamie's arms around his neck, her kisses. Of course he'd see her again. Why, he loved her. She was smarter, prettier, than Sophie. Sophie wouldn't have cried had he kissed her—she would have thought he had proposed and put their engagement in the papers. She probably thought they were even now. Wouldn't it be a joke on Sophie if he didn't marry her, after all? His parents—why should they rule his life?

Of course, marrying Mamie was out of the question—still, with pretty clothes, she'd beat any girl in Millersville on looks and brains. Why, she had them beat already. Hadn't she gone to High School until she had to stop to help out at home? Working every day, selling candy, luxuries—to others. Dear little thing—and now she was probably worrying because he had kissed her. Of course he'd see her—keep on seeking her. . . .

At ten o'clock he peered into the windows of the Busy Bee. Mamie was not there. At eleven he looked in again. He went to the office and attempted to work. He looked into the shop windows both going to and coming from luncheon. He couldn't keep his mind on what he was trying to do in the afternoon. Before three, he left for the day and went to the Busy Bee, looked in, went inside. It was almost a relief not to see Mamie—a relief, and yet it worried him.

A brown-haired girl he had never seen asked for his order. Embarrassed, he told her he wanted to speak to Miss Carpenter. What a fool he was. What else could he do?

Miss Carpenter hadn't been down all day—no, she didn't know what was the matter. Something she could do for him? Mechanically he ordered a box of candy.

He was glad he hadn't found Mamie there. After last night he didn't like to think of her clerking—waiting on people. He'd take her away—some place. Where? That was it—take her away. Still, he had to stay in Millersville—a town like Millersville! And she—why she cried when he kissed her—she was such a fragile, dainty little thing—like a lily—that was it—a lily, who had grown up in the muck of Gillen Row. Even too dainty for him. She wasn't at the store. What was the matter? What if—

He drove to Gillen Row as rapidly as he could, stopped his car in front of the forlorn cottage. What if her father was at home? Well, he could manage him—must manage him.

He ran up the front walk, up the broken steps, knocked at the door—the bell seemed out of order. He waited. No answer. Was there no one there?

He knocked again; tried to ring. No answer. He couldn't believe that the house was empty. He would wait. He stood on the porch, hesitating, wondering what to do. Then the door opened. It was Mamie.

She had on a blue suit, a plain little suit, with a white collar and a little black hat, turned up all around. He had never seen her except in summer things. How well she looked, with her bright hair showing below the hatbrim.

"You shouldn't have come here," she said. "You mustn't come. Go away—I never—was going to see you again."

"What's the matter? You aren't ill? You weren't at the Busy Bee?"

"I'm not going back again, ever. I—I can't stand it."

"What are you going to do, Mamie?"

She looked so little and tragic.

"Last night father was waiting for me when I got home. You don't know my father. He's cruel, brutal, sometimes. He seemed to know, before I told him—that I'd been driving with you. So



—I'm going away—I can't stand—this—any more.”

“Going—where?”

He came inside, closed the door. What a mean little house it was.

“I don't know. Away from this—any place. I've enough money to get to—to Giffordsville. I can find something to do there. I've got to have peace and contentment—something. And you must hate me—after I kissed you last night. You can't care for me—respect me—and your respect was all I had.”

“My dear, dear little girl. Why, I—I—”

His arms were around her again. But this time she did not meet his lips with hers. She dropped her head, struggled a little, then sighed.

“You see,” she said, “I can't struggle against you. I must go away. I can't stand it—any longer. This house, everything—and now—”

“Mamie.”

“Yes?”

“Look at me.”

“I can't.”

He forced her face upward.

“Do you love me?”

“Don't ask me to say it. You—know. Please don't be cruel to me. Let me go while I can.”

“Cruel to you? Mamie, I love you. You know that. You mustn't go away from Millersville.”

“I *must* go. After the quarrel with father, I can't stay here. That's settled.”

“You *mustn't* go.”

He repeated it over and over. He couldn't let her go. Without her, Millersville would be worse than oil-soaked Oklahoma. He dared not imagine it, even.

“I'm going now—I'm all ready for traveling. How can anything stop me?” She pointed to a little packed bag.

In his arms she was fragrant, sweet. How could she get along—what could she do, alone in the world? Why—she was his girl—he could take care of her. She understood him—his family—he wouldn't let his parents ruin his life.

Marry her? Of course. Wasn't she

better, nobler than the rest of the girls—a cruel father who misunderstood her—alone in the world, really—little and sweet and dear. Going away? Why, if he married her he could keep her here. Of course.

“I'm glad you're ready,” he said, “because you're going with me.”

“What—what do you mean?”

She drew away.

“What could I mean? We—we love each other. We can drive right down to the court-house this minute. You—you won't mind—marrying me, will you?”

She snuggled closer to him and hid her head. From the sounds she made, he couldn't tell whether she was sobbing or giggling. But it didn't matter. Surely a girl could have her own method of accepting a proposal of marriage.

### XIII

THE marriage has really turned out very well. Even Millersville admits it. After all, Mamie Embury proved herself an exceptional woman, and was quite able in every way to take her rightful place in society as Marlin Embury's wife. If her parents seemed below the Millersville social level, no one dared dwell upon it. For young Mrs. Embury, under her soft and blonde exterior, has rather a sharp manner at times and, when necessary, can refer, in the pleasantest way, to things that have taken place in the past—and even the best Millersville families have their skeletons, forged cheques, little unnamed graves, jail sentences, things like that. So, after all, a worthless father can't be held against a person, these days, all things considered.

Mamie is getting to be a bit of a snob, though, even her best friends think, because she objects to Millersville's newest rich belonging to the “society” set and speaks about drawing more conservative lines. Her father was the black sheep of the family, it appears. The Carpenters are really an old Kentucky family and she often tells that her mother was one of the Virginia Prichards. Millersville knows that there is a great



deal in heredity—that blood will tell—so her friends can understand her seeming snobbishness.

Mamie is a charming hostess, and prettier than ever, even if she has grown a bit rounder, and her husband is de-

voted to her. A poor girl who married the richest man in town—it's beautiful—and it's such a relief, with so many sordid things going on every day, to see real romance, a genuine love match, once in a while.



## Phantom

*By John Hall Wheelock*

ALONG the edge of the great moving sea,  
That moaned forever on her barren bars,  
The old, sad love came back again to me,  
Moving quietly under the quiet stars.

Oh, sad love, do not smile upon me so,  
Nodding so gently with your little head—  
All the old wonder of your eyes is dead,  
And the sea-winds have chilled you long ago.



WHAT puzzles every woman is the question whether it is pleasanter to be in love with a handsome fellow or to be loved by a rich one.



ONE always loves most the first time, but it is a good deal more comfortable the second time.



THERE are two ways to win a woman's love. One is to lie to her. So is the other.



NOTHING makes a woman more angry than to be made a saint against her will.





# Treasure-Trove

*By Lew Tennant*

WHEN Uncle Rudolph died he left a map with a cross-mark to indicate the place down by the old apple-tree where the treasure was buried. John and I, his only heirs, set out to find it. We located the old apple-tree, and the stone that was marked on the map. Then we began to dig. Very carefully we dug.

Alas! John's shovel smashed the bottle!



## Worship

*By Babette Deutsch*

I AM to you the climbing sun,  
The core of fire, the wings of light.  
Your eyes are blinder than the night  
To flames that flicker and aspire.

I am to you the deathless ache  
Of music fled. Dark music heard  
Above the close confusing word  
So stammeringly said.

I am to you the Unknown God.  
And so to you who fashioned me  
In your soul's image, holily,  
Look—I am kneeling too.



WHEN a woman's eyes sparkle like dew-drops, it is a sign (*a*) that she has just been kissed, (*b*) that she has just seen her husband kiss some other woman, or (*c*) that she has just had a contraband cocktail.





# The Lowden Household

By *L. M. Hussey*

## I

THIS laborious tour of the state on foot was young Albert Elliott's celebration of his freedom, his release from the durance of military service. It was the undertaking of a young man and a romantically imaginative one; he conceived the form of his holiday as a way of meeting more intimately with adventure than could be done in a motor, where one passed adventure by unseen in the dust stirred up in the road.

Nevertheless, having reached a point more than halfway to his goal, he had still failed to meet with any especially stirring excitement. He held recent recollections of a few pleasant encounters with pretty girls on the way; a tramp, the companion of an afternoon, had picked his pocket of small change; he had slept in a number of curious, small-town hotels, and under the sky more than once—it was all enjoyable, but a bit disappointing.

Then, swinging down at last into that picturesque eastern end of the state where at every mile one encounters an old house in which George Washington once spent a night, he met with the infant Phip bellowing loudly under a horse-chestnut tree, and calling tremendously, between howls, upon his invisible mother.

He was a very small boy, no more than four or five years old, dressed somewhat better than boys usually are in the country; he had a round face, red, dirty cheeks, and a strong voice. Elliott found no one near to give an ear to his complaint. The fields were

quiet; somewhere, over the edge of a hill, a dog was barking.

Elliott approached and questioned him.

He said that his name was Phip, a short way of saying Philip. He explained that he was afraid to go home.

"Where do you live?" Elliott inquired. "Are you lost?"

The small boy shook his head and pointed down the road. Then Elliott asked him what he was afraid of.

It developed, from his explanation, that some cows had broken out of their pasture a short distance further on, and Phip, returning from an excursion that seemed to hold obscure elements of illegality, had been terrified at their presence and afraid to pass among them. This was a curious timidity for a country boy, but Elliott took his hand and offered to see him home.

They walked slowly down the road together. The boy was consoled now and grew somewhat talkative; he spoke gravely about politics and said that his father was a Republican and that he was one too; that he liked soldiers and intended to be one when he grew up; he would prefer to be the General.

Presently they came to a short lane. There was a farmhouse back among the trees. The boy recognized it as his home; Elliott was about to take leave of him when a woman ran down out of the lane, seized the child in her arms, and covered his dirty cheeks with her kisses.

Then she looked questioningly and a little suspiciously at the young man, who found it necessary to make an explanation.



"He was half a mile up the road and crying because he was afraid to pass some cows that were loose. I brought him back."

She was smiling now, and for a moment their eyes met frankly. Then a curious little confusion seemed to embarrass her; her eyes wavered and dropped and Elliott thought that she reddened a little. This self-consciousness in talking to him stirred his interest, especially as she was older than himself, the mother of the small boy, although by no means past her youth.

As she hesitated, apparently finding it difficult to thank him properly, he appraised her with a swift examination.

Her dress surprised him; it was simple but pretty, rather like the sort of summer frock one sees on a girl out for an informal walk in the city; like her boy, she was better dressed than people usually are at midday in the country. He found her figure a little fragile. He noticed her hands as they held the boy up in her arms; the fingers were long, slender and white. Her face, too, was pale, with scarcely a suggestion of sunburn. She had brown hair, gray eyes, and a sensitive mouth.

He came to the conclusion that these folks had not been country people long.

Now she was thanking him, telling him that he was very kind, and in the midst of her nervously delivered words a man appeared in the lane and joined them with a direct look at Elliott, the stranger.

The woman let her boy slide down out of her arms and the child, apparently wishing to avoid the newcomer, ran up the lane and disappeared.

"This is Mr. Lowden—my husband," she said. "John, this gentleman found Phip up the road; he was afraid to come back. This gentleman brought him home. I've been thanking him."

The man smiled and held out his hand.

"I don't believe I've met you anywhere around here," he said. "I certainly am obliged to you for your trouble."

Elliott told Lowden his name and ex-

plained, briefly, that he was a stranger, a pedestrian doing a walking tour of the state.

Whilst in the course of his explanation he glanced at the woman. Her eyes were fastened intently upon his face with almost the naïveté of a child watching the lips of an adult during some alluring recitation; she averted her head at his glance.

Lowden, the husband, was quite cordial. He was a small man, older than his wife, with a certain severity of countenance that was not, however, impressive. The young man felt that he was the sort of chap one would not be able to warm up to easily. However, he appeared to have agreeable intentions.

"That's very interesting," he told Elliott. "I suppose you've had rough going, here and there. Where are you making for now?"

Elliott mentioned the name of the next town.

"That's over ten miles," said the older man. "You won't get there until three or four this afternoon. Where are you going to have lunch?"

"Well, I usually pick out one of the farmhouses along the road and persuade the people to sell me something to eat. I'll find one further on."

Lowden shook his head.

"No use doing that," he said. "We're just about to eat, and we'll be glad to do you a favour in return for one you've done us. Come up to the house with us."

The young man was hungry; it was a pleasant suggestion and they all walked up the lane together. The woman went on a little in front, the two men following. Lowden, who seemed to be a talkative man, was explaining that they had only been farmers for a period of less than two years; they were doing "scientific" farming, he said. This confirmed Elliott's first impression of the boy and his mother. They had lacked the country manner.

The lane turned into an ungraded lawn in front of the farm house and here and there farm implements were scattered about; a disc harrow, a plow



turned over on its side, the curved prongs of a dismantled hay rake. It did not look especially scientific.

Meanwhile, the experimental farmer was garrulously explaining his ideas to the stranger.

Elliott had no particular interest in his talk, but the man himself was interesting by contrast with the apparently sensitive and peculiar woman whom Elliott now knew to be his wife. He was watching the older man's face in a scrutinizing way when, at the side of the house, his feet became entangled in a coil of fence wire concealed in the grass; he stumbled, threw out his arms and fell.

He laughed in embarrassment, but as he attempted to rise a swift, sharp pain made him cry out involuntarily.

Lowden bent over him.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Hurt yourself?"

The young man's face had whitened; he eased his foot a little to one side.

"I'm afraid you'll have to give me a lift," he said. "I—I seem to have pulled a tendon."

## II

INDOORS, leaning back in a big chair in some pain, it was obvious at once that he could not go on. His ankle had swelled rapidly and now it was wrapped up in wet cloths to ease his discomfort. Again, Lowden showed that he was a man with decent intentions.

"Don't worry," he said. "We have plenty of room and we can put you up for a week or so until you're able to get over to town and take a train. Your trip is spoiled, that's certain; I surely am sorry."

It was a generous offer and Elliott was ashamed that he still felt a little repelled by the man. He explained it as a prejudice based upon the other's unprepossessing appearance. Lowden's smallness of figure had, in an obscure way, a weazened touch. His face, too, was small, and excessively lined; the black eyes, covered with spectacles, lacked warmth. His hair was of the

bristling sort that stood up all over his head like a wild growth of thick, stubborn grass.

The young man, who had been helped into a comfortable living room, evidently remodeled when the experimental farmers took over the house, was naturally unable to walk into the dining room for his luncheon; it was brought into him by Lowden's young wife. He had almost forgotten her in the discomfort and surprise of the last half hour.

Just prior to her appearance with the tray of hot dishes he had been startled by the sudden, yet familiar, howls of the small boy, Phip, apparently coming out of the kitchen. At the termination of this disturbance Mrs. Lowden appeared abruptly and the young man was surprised to see that her face was quite pale; the lower lip was puckered a little in one corner, as if she held a bit of the inner edge between her concealed teeth. She set the tray on a small table in front of the sufferer.

"What's the matter with the little boy?" he asked. "Has he hurt himself?"

She did not meet his eyes, answering with a nervous abruptness.

"No, Mr. Lowden has been giving him a whipping for running away up the road."

Elliott smiled sympathetically.

"Oh, that's too bad," he said.

The woman faced him and her pale cheeks were coloured with a swift rush of crimson.

"It's a shame!" she exclaimed. "It's . . . brutal!"

Her aggressive mood collapsed like a bubble and again she dropped her eyes.

"I shouldn't have said that," she murmured. "I suppose he's *got* to be punished when he doesn't obey. But I hate to see him whipped!"

The touch of intimacy brought about by her impulsive declaration obviously embarrassed her now, and she answered several of Elliott's casual questions without looking at him. She inquired if he were easier, murmured something about being sorry, and then left the



room in the manner of one making an uncomfortable retreat.

Lowden came in later and once more assured the young man of his hospitality, told him there was no cause for worry, and then talked for half an hour about a scheme for raising drug plants that bored Elliott more than he felt to be rational.

Again he observed that Lowden lacked the gift, however generous his acts, of arousing a cordial response. Moreover, he appeared to be unaware of his deficiency.

During the afternoon Elliott amused himself, when his foot was not throbbing with a pain that absorbed all his other attention, by looking through some books Lowden had left on the little table, pulled around at his side. His mood was somewhat petulant now; he complained of his fortune, and felt uncomfortable about his situation for, after all, he was the enforced guest of strangers. Even the young wife, with her pretty frailty, and her curious, diffident response to himself, failed to interest him now.

Later she brought in his supper, but there were no more impulsive confidences and when she came back, after it was dark, she was accompanied by her husband and the little boy.

The lights were turned on and they all sat in the room together. Lowden gave the young man a bad cigar and began to talk again, a monologue that now seemed natural and characteristic. He was depreciating the empirical methods of the usual farmer, and elaborating upon his own. Elliott found it all very tiresome and after a short time took little precaution against showing his boredom, but the older man was oblivious to that, and continued to talk, slowly, endlessly, with an irritating air of finality in judgment.

His wife was silent. At first she took up a book to read, but presently the young man, stealing glances at her quiet figure, discovered that she was sitting in her chair, the book opened across her knees, staring off into the room like a devotee lost in contemplation. A

swift sympathy for her came into his emotions, almost as an inspiration. How tired she must have grown of Lowden, of his terrible monologues!

He imagined her mute, enslaved, listening to the man, her ears assaulted through all the days of the year by the unrippled stream of his dusty words. She was the sort to desire another kind of companionship—and Elliott saw that the older man would be inevitably oblivious to her need.

She disappeared at last, taking little Phip up to bed, but as she went, turning a moment at the door to say good night, she met Elliott's eyes and he could not restrain a piteous look that embraced not only his own bored predicament, but what he knew would be endlessly hers. His glance startled her; he saw her eyes widen, and then, although he could not be sure in the dusk of the room, he thought she blushed. At any rate, she turned quickly and led her boy out through the opened door.

Lowden released his prisoner at last and, giving him a cane for support, helped him to climb the stairs to the bedroom that had been prepared for him. It was a painful journey, and he found himself so exhausted that sleep came immediately, without any contemplation of the Lowden household.

### III

THE next morning he was better, although of course he could bear no weight upon the injured ankle. He hobbled his way down the stairs and took his breakfast with the others in the dining room.

Lowden seemed glad to see him, and when the young man suggested that he would be in shape to go on in two or three days the other denied his optimism with emphasis, insisted that he remain in their home until he was perfectly well. This showed, Elliott thought with a twinge of bitter recollection, his appreciation of a new victim for his garrulity. It was a bad predicament. The young man saw no lane of escape.

As appeared to be her custom, Low-



den's young wife was silent during the meal. Elliott felt that this was not entirely characteristic; he found her rather hopelessly and unnaturally subdued. Lowden did all the talking. He spoke upon the subject of soya beans and the fixation of nitrogen, declaring that the farmer who bought fertilizer was therefore an ass. The expounding of his doctrine was interrupted only long enough to dismiss young Phip from the table for some infraction of the house etiquette. As the child left the room under the lash of his father's sarcasm, Elliott glanced at the mother. Her eyes were downcast, and her face had paled.

After breakfast the invalid went into the living-room again, sat down as before, taking up one of the books to read. Perhaps half an hour had gone by when he was surprised to see Mrs. Lowden enter and stand just inside the door, looking at him expectantly.

He understood at once that she had come in only to speak to him, but now she was unable to find words. He felt it necessary to speak himself; he made some trivial remark about the day.

She nodded, came further into the room, and stood near his chair, looking down into his face.

"I've been worried about some things I said to you yesterday," she began, abruptly. Elliott felt a little confused. At the same time, he experienced his former sense of pride that she should react to him with such an obvious diffidence. A degree of adventurous expectancy stirred in him remotely.

"Oh, you didn't say anything to worry about," he replied.

She shook her head, in doubt.

"It must have seemed queer to you," she said. "I'd only just seen you once before. We were strangers."

"No, it didn't seem queer. Just natural."

She was silent for a moment. Her eyes were averted now, but the desire of saying something further held her at his side.

Then she met his eyes again, speaking in a low voice. Her query was

almost forced out of unwilling lips.

"Why did you look at me the way you did last night?" she asked. "I mean, when I was taking Phip up to bed?"

Her question astonished him; its curious directness was wholly unexpected from her.

He hesitated, began to speak and stopped, finding words very difficult.

Moreover, a sense of his youth rushed upon him, and although the girl at his side was also young, she was nevertheless a married woman, and therefore, he felt, his superior in experience.

"Well," he began at last, "I thought you knew what I meant. I... I thought you agreed with me..."

She shook her head, but when she spoke there was no angry colour in her voice and he believed her a little insincere.

"It wasn't kind of you," she said. "John is a very good man. He's good to everybody. He's been good to you."

Her words made young Elliott ashamed; after all, they were doubtless fundamentally true. It seemed impossible now that he could have taken such a liberty—to depreciate this woman's husband on the first day of their meeting, whilst he was a guest in the house.

"You must pardon me," he murmured.

"Oh, don't feel bad about it!" she exclaimed, apparently eager now to remove all the sting of her half-hearted rebuke.

She turned around, looked for the nearest chair, and sat down. Now she was smiling, with a certain expectant shyness.

"Won't you tell me something about your trip?" she asked. "It sounds so interesting! And I'm so dull here; I've been so dull ever since we came out to the country. It seems to me I never hear anything about the world. Sometimes I feel as if I'd stopped living—like someone lost in a nightmare, you know."

His aplomb returned, and with it the little zest, the vague sense of adventure, that her presence gave him. He began to tell her about his small ex-



periences; her interest was disproportionate to their value.

She listened with her gray eyes meeting his own intently. Her cheeks were coloured a little and something long pent escaped into her features illuminating them with a touch of obscure excitement. Despite the innocence of their conversation Elliott felt an irrational flavour of something illicit in it.

He expanded, delighted with the interest of his audience and his own importance; he was gesturing freely when Lowden unexpectedly entered the room. The two turned to meet his gaze with the momentary air of conspirators and a sudden frown cut deeper the lines between his eyes.

His wife stood up quickly.

"Mr. Elliott has been telling me about his tour," she said. "Isn't it a shame that he's met with such a mean accident?"

Lowden's touch of displeasure vanished; he nodded.

"But now he's here," he said, "he's going to stay until that ankle is strong again. Don't let him persuade you that he can go on tomorrow, or the next day."

The atmosphere was cleared. A penetrating howl from young Phip, in trouble somewhere in the house, took Mrs. Lowden hurriedly from the room. Lowden sat down to talk.

With a face of despair the young man listened.

#### IV

He made a rapid improvement and in three or four days was able to walk about with the aid of the cane; he knew that in a few more days he could easily go. But now, despite his sufferings from Lowden's assaults, he found himself regretful at the close prospect of parting from these people.

In fact, he was deeply interested in the young wife. It was not an interest that he accepted with sophistication, being still too youthfully naïve for that, but he was unable to deny its strength. He was troubled; sometimes, talking to Lowden, he felt very caddish, for the

man had undoubtedly been decent in his intentions.

Since their interrupted talk there had been no additional confidences between the two. Once, passing through the hall, they had come face to face and the girl had smiled suddenly, going on without a word. Her smile, coming to her lips with a spontaneity that was at once surprising and immeasurably charming, had stirred young Elliott beyond his expectation.

He found himself thinking of her, off and on, at all hours. He thought of her sentimentally; he visioned her as a flower denied the sun. The quality of her fragile loveliness strengthened his simile.

Lowden's crude obliviousness to her need angered him. She was the sort of woman made for the delicacies of emotion, delicate attentions, subtle considerations. Lowden, a stupid, tiresome man, was her captor, holding her spirit in the chains of his obtuseness.

How had such a man ever secured her initial regard? This was too great a problem for young Elliott, who was still youthful enough to seek and expect a certain rationality in the arrangement of life. He came to the confused, erroneous opinion that in the beginning Lowden must have employed some sort of misrepresentation, a dressing up in peacock's feathers, a low sort of chicanery, holding out hopes for whose fulfillment he had no plans. In these moments he was angry and the husband took on a sinister aspect.

Accompanying his other emotions was one of self-congratulation, a sweet expanding of his ego. The girl, for all that she was married, admired him, found him interesting, appreciated his contrast with Lowden's stupidity. He began to understand his own charm and a pleasant assurance from this recognition gave him many comfortable hours. His success was an argument for an agreeable future, with others. . . .

Several days passed.

Then at the dinner table one evening Elliott announced his intention of leaving the following day. His host de-



murred but the young man maintained his determination.

Mrs. Lowden left the table before the others and after she had gone Lowden invited his guest to drive a few miles that evening in the car on some business relating to the farm.

"I'd like you to go along," he said.

The young man found it difficult to decline, but his plea that he was afraid the trip might shake him up too much for his start the next day was finally accepted.

After Lowden had gone he wandered out to the lawn, where he sat down alone on a bench. He languidly watched the distant progress of a herd of cattle moving across the top of the hill beyond the road. His mood was one of half-contented melancholy, such as one feels at twilight.

The country was quiet, cloaked with peace. Elliott watched the cattle disappear and after them a small boy, the herdsman, who carried a long stick that waved like a jet wand as he descended over the summit of the hill. A rabbit ran across the lawn in ungainly leaps. The flush of the departed sun began to fade out of the sky.

Elliott arose, took up his cane and walked toward the house. He entered by the front door, passed through the short hall, and walked into the living-room.

In the dusk, away from the window, he found Mrs. Lowden. Her face was clasped in her two concealing hands and she was sobbing.

He stood just inside the door, staring at her slender, shadowy figure. A second later she looked up, and, seeing him there, concealed her face again between her hands.

He crossed the room and stood near her.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "What's happened?"

She did not answer; he repeated his question.

Her voice came out between her fingers, subdued, half broken.

"I thought you'd gone with John," she murmured.

He shook his head.

"No. I thought . . . I might have a chance to talk to you."

His words were spoken with a sense of daring; he had hardly intended them. She did not look up, although she withdrew her hands, that fell into her lap.

"What's the matter?" he asked again.

"Nothing . . ." she whispered. And then, raising her face suddenly: "Why did you want to talk to me?"

"Because—"

He found it impossible to explain, although his reason was clear enough in his mind. Her fragile face, that wavered now like a night blossom in the shadowed mists of her disordered hair, enchanted him, and at last he yielded himself to this charm without restraint. She had her allure; he found her sweet.

He drew a little closer to her.

"I know you're unhappy!" he exclaimed. "*He* doesn't give you what you've hoped for, does he? I've watched you; I've felt so sorry for you. I've felt too, as if—as if *I'd* been cheated!"

She looked up at him swiftly.

"What do you mean?"

Then his words had not angered her! She admitted his accusation, admitted the failure of her content.

"I saw that you were not happy the first day I came," he added.

She was still looking up into his face.

"What right have you to say this?" she whispered.

Urged beyond his resistance, thrilled with a pulsing excitement, he put out his hand; it touched the soft strands of her hair. She did not stir. He bent over her, took her cheeks between his hands and kissed the line of her half concealed lips. He felt them give back the pressure of his own.

He knelt at her side and her slim hands came about his neck, her slender fingers ran in slow caresses through his thick hair.

"Dear boy," she murmured. "I'm not unhappy now! Do you think I'm very bad? I don't care, dear. I needed you so much; I was so long waiting for you! Think how blind I was when I married him—I thought I could give



him love! Dear, my dear, it is wonderful that you came to me!"

He listened to her romantic words, finding them significant, endowing them, in his romantic imagination, with a stirring significance. He was proud, glad, thrilled. He drew her dim face to his lips; he ran his fingers across the smooth texture of her cool skin.

He was holding her lips to his own, her arms imprisoned him, when someone crossed the outer porch, entered the hall: it was Lowden's step.

Elliott started with surprise and drew backward, but her arms did not release him.

"I didn't expect him now!" he muttered.

Close to his ear her voice whispered, trembling with her excitement.

"I don't care! I won't let you go! I don't care!"

Her abandon astonished him; he remembered all her former diffidence, her little embarrassments, her shy retreats. Now, in the moment of danger, he found his romantic urge inadequate.

After all, he did not love her; the fervour of her starved emotions repelled his own. His little, innocent zest of adventure did not measure to the terrifying sentiment she indulged.

He drew in his breath, set his muscles to break the bond of the woman's arms. He could hear the breath of the man in the hall.

Then Lowden moved on and the sound of his footfall diminished in the house.

The girl's arms fell; Elliott stood erect. He found that he was trembling. He looked down into her face.

Her head was tilted back, but she did not seem to see him. The look of languorous delight had gone from her face and, coming there only in that moment, was realization—and terror. She understood now the incredible proportions of her own temerity. With Lowden gone she visioned to herself what might have happened.

Without a word young Elliott moved softly toward the door.

## V

He found it difficult to sleep that night. He regretted his insane impulsiveness, the movement of his hand that had brought the touch of her hair. He recalled her words of ardour, the seeming claim she made upon him, and in spite of his last view of her, when her moment of abandon had passed, he was afraid of what she might do in the morning. Suppose her strange impulsiveness betrayed him then, precipitated a scene?

He went to sleep at last and when he awoke and dressed he found it difficult to go down to breakfast. Finally he forced himself to that necessity, descended the stairs, entered the dining-room. Lowden and his wife were already there, waiting. Lowden said good morning; the girl was silent.

As they sat down to the table their glances met.

She looked into his eyes with a swift, imploring significance — and, understanding, he felt an immeasurable relief. Her glance asked him to forget.

After breakfast she disappeared. Lowden was unable to drive Elliott over to town himself; he was to be taken there by the hired man. The car was waiting outside.

The men shook hands, said words of parting. Young Elliott got into the car, the hired man followed. Then the woman appeared on the porch and he turned and waved to her.

She did not raise her hand, but only nodded with her head. Standing there in the early morning, touched with sunlight, she looked infinitely fragile; once more Elliott's sense of pity stirred in his heart, mingled with a certain satisfaction.

After all, he had given her something. The thought brought him, for the first time in his life, the feeling of having lived, a vague appreciation of limitations, of an end to all experiences, to even life itself. Confused in his emotions was a recognition of the fundamental disharmonies that thwart all



hopes, raising up problems beyond solution; *her* problem.

The hired man started the engine. At that moment young Phip rushed across the lawn and sprang on the running board. He insisted on being taken along; Lowden called to him to come away. Phip ignored the command; Elliott was laughing.

"Get down, Phip," he said.

Phip shook his head.

Then Lowden ran forward, pulled the boy from his perch, and turning him over on his knee began to administer an extemporaneous punishment. The child howled, and his cries were mingled with the roar of the engine as the car jerked forward.

It turned into the lane. Elliott could

hear Lowden's voice admonishing the boy. The sharp sound of his descending palm had ceased.

"There!" he said. "I'll give you more if you like it. Do you like it?"

The question was repeated, coming a little faintly now.

"Do you like it?"

Phip's voice, clearing, sputtering with his grief, floated down into the lane.

"I—I—like the s-sound, but I d-d-don't like the feel!" he wailed.

Laughing, Elliott looked back again. The girl had gone and swiftly the young man had a picture of her, erect, rebelling against her destiny, her pale face suffused with the colour of her indignant anger.



## The Golden Bell

*By Patience Worth*

LOVE is a golden bell  
With a silver tongue,  
But the tongue, be it gone,  
Maketh o' the golden bell  
An empty thing.



WHEN a man shuts his eyes when he kisses it may signify either that he is bashful or that he is marrying the girl for her money.



A WOMAN is getting old when she begins admiring the rounded curve of a boy's face instead of the squared jaw of a man's.



A MAN doesn't mind if his wife throws crockery at him. What makes him mad is the fact that she occasionally hits him.



# Genius

By John F. Lord

HE was the owner of a large department store. He wished to have his women customers enter by a certain door, yet he found it difficult to lead them to do so. In spite of numerous printed signs, they persisted in using other entrances. Finally he hit upon a bright idea. Over the entrance he wished them to use he painted, in large letters, the word *Exit*.



## Pan Pipes

By Vincent Starrett

THE bank which in my wanderings  
Sometimes I chance to pass,  
Has handsome crystal chandeliers  
And doors of polished brass . . .

*Oh, once I had a copper cent;  
I didn't have it long.  
I spent my penny for a pipe  
And piped a little song.*

And many pass with eager tread  
Into the banker's place,  
And drop their dollars in his box,  
With shining eyes and face . . .

*Oh, once I piped a little song  
For tired little men:  
But still they put their dollars in  
And take them out again.*



WOMAN'S most painfully delightful pastime is listening for the telephone that never rings.





# The Little Priest of Percé

By Rita Wellman

THE big rock stands out in the sea like a ship that has stranded while coming toward shore, bravely a ship at the prow, if shattered and misshapen at the stern. On her only deck, covered with rough grass, the screaming gulls, "*margot*" as they call them here, have an unmolested home. Only once in a year can a man approach this rock ship, when the sea which beats about her perilous keel, recedes at lowest tide and leaves a narrow, rocky pathway which seems to have been made by a miracle.

On the evening of the day of lowest tide, I met the Little Priest coming toward me on the narrow passageway to the rock. He was a strange figure, with his tall, thin, boyish body muffled in the voluminous long skirts of the French curé, on his head the wide black hat.

We were completely alone. We spoke.

"I came to kill a *margot*!" he told me with boyish enthusiasm.

"How?" I asked.

"With a stone. You frighten them while they are in the water. They fly up. Then you get them."

He flung a stone up to the sides of the rock which seemed to rise forever above us. There was a stirring of wings, and shrill metallic cries of fright. Then all was still.

"It is the dark," he explained in his defence, as no quarry came down.

We sat down, each on a boulder, and watched the water creep up to possess the passageway it had temporarily released. After a time the water began to surround the boulder where the Little Priest sat, and he moved one, almost

as large and heavy, next to mine. I saw that he was pleased to show me how strong he was, and, like most women, I admire strength.

The Little Priest smoked a pipe, a very mature looking pipe. We had a long, comfortable silence — like old friends. The moon was rising. We could see it through the hole in the stern of the great rock, where the sea had won its way after years of battle. At last The Little Priest spoke.

"You come from the city?"

"Yes."

"I tried to live in the city. I could not stand it. It is the air—and I miss that sound."

We listened to the sound of the sea as it struggled with the rocks, receding and gaining but always victorious.

"There go the fishermen out," he said after a time. We heard the faint *chug tut, chug tut* of their motors.

"They fish at night?" I asked in surprise.

He smiled with a boy's condescension.

"Oh, no. At night they get the bait. At four in the morning they start out. They stay all day long. I have seen my uncle come from baiting at three in the morning, and then get up at four again to fish. They work hard. They are poorly paid, and the stores cheat them with the nets. They pay twice as dear for the nets as the storekeeper does, but they cannot buy direct because if they do he will not give them credit. And there is the gasoline. They must pay for that. In the old days, a man had his own strong arms and his sail. Now all that is changed."



We heard them singing, old plaintive songs from their native Jersey.

"They are happy," I said.

"Yes. Anyway—content. My father tried to work in the city. He was a good foreman. But he could not stand it. It is the sea."

"But you have left the calling of the sea?"

"Yes," he said slowly. "It was my mother's wish. I have been at the Academy for seven years—since I was fourteen. In four years I shall be a real curé."

"Then you will come here?"

"Oh, no, I will go to the Labrador coast and work there among the Indians. I spent one winter there. They are ungodly people, and it is very cold, very still."

All this he told me evenly, and simply, with no enthusiasm, and no regret. I wondered about him, what his inner life was, what were his enthusiasms, his affections. I asked him about the school, about the boys.

"You have many friends, of course?"

"Oh, yes. Many."

"But one! Isn't there one friend near to you there, nearer than all the others?"

"No," he answered. "I study hard, and then, in the evening, when there is time to talk, I am tired and sleepy. I go to bed."

Far off, back in the village, the church bells rang.

"The angelus," the Little Priest said. "It rings every night at this time, and in the morning at six. That is, it should, but sometimes the little boy who rings the bell forgets to get up in time."

He smiled tenderly.

The moon was becoming golden as it rose, and threw a yellow streamer across the sea.

We sat talking of many things, of star-fish and of waterfalls, of mountains and of birds, of fossils and rocks. It was for us as it is for children who have just met; we were eager to share the fair, material world which presented itself to us as an early morning, new and clean, and ready to begin. In this innocence, we seemed to be skipping,

hand in hand, out over the yellow highway, straight to the golden moon.

When, at last, we walked back to the village, the Little Priest stopped before the one story shed which bears the sign—*Bureau de Poste*, and beneath this a small shingle with the word—*Avocat*.

"I must get my mail," he said.

Then he laughed.

"My mail? My paper, I should say. No one ever sends me letters."

He did not even offer to walk home with me, but left me abruptly with the casualness of a child.

## II

It seemed to come about that we met every evening at almost the same hour, at the same place, before the great limestone rock just as the last glow of the sun was lingering over its prow, causing its saffron and rose and amethyst to gleam like the dress of some carved goddess of Greece. And there we sat talking, skipping in pleasure through a bright world that held only simplicity and joy.

One night he told me:

"My mother is more sick today."

"Your mother ill . . . ? I didn't know . . ."

"She has consumption," he said quietly. "That is why I came here from school. My father died of it."

Consumption in this paradise, with the sea, the pines, the vast freedom of the mountains! Then I thought of the little two-story houses where so many must live together, the long, inactive, dull winters, with very little fresh food to eat—the eternal dried fish.

"If she should die, my brothers and sisters would be alone. I am the eldest."

"Then you would have to give up your plan of becoming a curé?" I asked gently.

In response to my sympathy he looked at me with something like reproach.

"It is in God's hands," he said quietly. "The rocks must give in to the sea. The *oursin de mer* cannot get out of his shell. Even the *cormoran*, when his wings are wet, cannot fly. God knows



the reasons, and we only know that there are reasons."

As we talked, the moon seemed to have blanched, like a face drawn in pain. The sea was quickening its pace, hurrying over the outer rocks, and slapping up against the big rock. Suddenly the sky began to quiver with light, a fierce, freezing light as if from a host of divine swords. Here, there, now all over the sky, these flashes came and went, mingled and changed; they became colors, red, orange, yellow, violet, and danced and darted, and circled, always changing, deepening, spreading. I clutched the arm of the Little Priest.

"It is all art, all poetry!" I exclaimed.

"No," he said firmly, "it is God."

Gradually, as we watched in ecstasy, this wonder faded from the sky, leaving it grey, the wreck of a fierce emotion.

"When the lights come," the Little Priest told me, "the fisherpeople play and sing, and if the lights dance then they pull the curtains and hide themselves because it is said to be a bad sign."

We walked back to the village in silence.

"I shall never forget this night," I said as we parted.

"Oh, we often see the northern lights, as they are called," the Little Priest told me in a matter of fact way. "They are quite common in this month."

I watched him as he walked away, his young, boyish stride struggling with the blowing skirts. What was his secret? Like a man to whom life has dealt all her blows, to whom the core of suffering has been bared, this boy of twenty seemed impervious to everything, nothing could touch his perfect serenity. His calm was the calm of great seas, unerring in obedience to the Law of all Laws.

### III

My friends at the hotel had begun to notice my friendship with the Little Priest, and had remarked it in great amusement. One night, with an air of great conspiracy, they came to where he

and I sat, and surrounded us. They had brought wine and food. One of them found an immense tree root, seasoned and whitened with sea water, and dragged it up to where we sat, and set it afire. My friends were gay. All of the women smoked. Madame T., winding her scarf about her head, kicked off her shoes and stockings, and danced about the fire, her black eyes gleaming in her fire-lit face, her white teeth flashing in a smile which was always directed toward the Little Priest.

Monsieur G. told us that he had brought a bottle of champagne. In the dark he uncorked it loudly, and it was only when he was pouring out the liquor that we detected his trick. After that, he imitated a rooster crowing, a train coming into a shed, and a dog barking at a cat. At all of which we laughed loudly, but we did not forgive him about the champagne.

The Little Priest sat off in the shadows smoking his pipe, his eyes, in the glow, as inscrutable as those of the Gautama. My friends had innumerable sly jokes at his expense, none of them very witty or amusing, how he wished that they were not there, how he wished that he could be alone with me, how romantic were the moonlight nights by the sea, how lonely a young man's heart would be when Madame went away.

People are like that. Youth and seriousness are always a tempting target. Mist was gathering over the sea. A siren at the light-house on the headland screamed out. Monsieur Y turned directly to the Little Priest, and said, smilingly,

*"Il y a deux sirènes sur la plage ce soir, n'est pas?"*

There was a shout of laughter. Through it all the Little Priest sat calm and unmoved.

An unresisting target grows wearisome and the little party grew bored after a time, and planned to go back to their cards. I went with the others, the Little Priest following behind.

We said a long good night. The French love leave-taking.



Madame G. said to me behind her hand,

"Madame, it would take you a whole summer to get that young man's heart, I see that. You had better give up. You have not the time."

## IV

I HAD formed the habit of going out late, after everyone in my house was asleep, and sitting behind the house where the stable was, watching the sea. Here were the tiny garden, and the straw stack; and the odour of the growing things and the clean stable smell mixed pleasantly with the fresh wind from the water. To-night I was too restless to sit. I walked up the beach with the free feeling of being entirely alone.

Before I realized it, I had come upon the place where the Little Priest and I had always met. As I approached the rocks, I heard a strange sound, a sound like the wind, and yet not the wind. In the silence it startled me. It was not the siren, for the mists had cleared, and the moon shone strong again. The sound increased. It frightened and hurt me, like the sounds of unbearable pain. I looked all about, but I could see nothing from which the sounds might come.

Was it some ageless anguish which was tearing up out of the rocks themselves? Suddenly, I saw a black spot close beside one of the streaked grey boulders, like an unaccountable shadow. It was unmistakable. The black robe of the Little Priest! He was bent over, crushed down, his head on a flat stone, sobbing, sobbing!

I went near and bent down.

"Monsieur le curé . . . !"

He turned to me a face wild with pain.

"Your friends," he burst out violently, ". . . what *they said!*"

I felt the guilt of it. I felt the city come and take me by the heart, all the ways of the city, its winding, shaded, difficult ways. I was of it, body and soul! I could never escape. What had we done? We had imposed the weight of our city thought upon him, for, in spite of our theories, real innocence is simply the freedom from this weight. In some inexplicable way, unknown to anyone, we had burdened his soul with the consciousness of sin.

The moon was round and opulent now, a mature beauty conscious of her power. The air was warm, and sweet with the salt blowing in from the sea. The low tide murmured voluptuously, as it played with the silver coins flung from the moon.

The Little Priest's eyes were upon me, humid and dark and fathomless.

I felt as if some superb thing were expected of me. The night seemed to demand it. His eyes demanded it. I shriveled in my soul at my own inadequacy.

"They—they did not understand," I said lamely, and ran away.

## V

I LOOKED back. He was sitting there still, huddled like one of the rocks, as silent and as full of mystery, waiting, watching the sea. What would become of him, I asked myself? Would he go now and teach the Indians of the life of Christ? Would he be forced to come back here and become a fisherman, never properly paid, asking no more of the sea than it gives, asking no more of life than to work to live and to live to work?

Of what was he thinking as he sat there? Was it of God? Was it of men? Was it of—love?

I shall never know. The next morning, very early, I went away.





# The Third Woman

By Lew Hewitt

I T is a mistake to imagine that all the luxurious homes on Long Island border the coast. The Porlands' did not; and it is as graceful outside and as well fitted out inside as any home built and owned by a man with an income ranging from thirty to fifty thousand a year might be.

On this especial June morning the Porlands stood at their *porte cochère*, helping into the trim car with the equally trim chauffeur no less a personage than Miss Elsie Tenniel.

Mrs. Porland held the actress' hand in her own for a much longer time than is required by the conventions.

"And you must be sure to run down again in August, just as soon as we come back. I don't know when I've enjoyed anything so much as your visit."

Miss Tenniel opened her big black eyes with that expression of wonderment that fitted so well her youth and good looks. In spite of an air of sophistication, she radiated a childish joy of living.

"Oh, I'll come," she said eagerly. "I'm so glad that you want me that I—I hardly know what to say."

She turned to the maker of plays. "And I suppose while you're climbing the Rocky Mountains I must keep right on pointing revolvers at people, and planning robberies, and reforming, and doing all the other things a poor crook girl in a play has to do."

Porland laughed a little uneasily. She was now holding his hand in her own.

"We must write another kind of play for you," he said. "I know Mrs. Porland won't give me any peace till I sit down to it."

The girl thanked him with a parting pat on the back of his hand.

"Oh, if you just would!"

As Mrs. Porland waved for the last time to the speeding car, she turned sharply to her husband.

"And now," she said, "now you've seen for yourself. Isn't she everything I said? Isn't she *just* the one?"

Leading the way to the broad veranda, Bobby Porland sought out the biggest and softest of all the big and soft wicker chairs. Then, carefully disregarding the contents of the smoking stand, he lit a large drop-jeweled pipe.

"I don't like her," he said between puffs. "I don't like any of 'em, and I don't want anything to do with any of 'em. I write plays; they act 'em; that ends it. Besides, it's a cinch I can't write the sort of drama you want me to write."

With her softest and most wheedling manner, Mrs. Porland seated herself on the arm of the chair. "You'll be doing it for me, Robert. I know that if you tried you could write a play that would be something with true feeling and emotion, something better than all these bread-and-butter artificialities. And Miss Tenniel is the one person to play it. She's just a good competent leading woman now—that's all the managers know about her. But I know she has possibilities, wonderful possibilities. Look at her eyes. I tell you, Robert, she feels, and she can express what she feels."

It was the last of many discussions on the subject, but this time Mrs. Porland broke down the final barriers of her husband's resistance.

"Well," he agreed finally, "I'll tackle



it; but I know before starting that I can't make a go of it and that there's no use trying. As for this Tenniel woman—"He rammed home a fresh pipeful of tobacco—"I wish she'd stayed in her stock company in Greenland—or Fargo, North Dakota, or wherever she came from."

Without undergoing any of the hardships of genius, Porland had acquired an income, a waistline and a wife. All these things had come to him by degrees.

When his father died at the end of Bobby's sophomore year at Princeton, the young man found a job in the box-office of one of Carstein's theaters. Those were the halcyon days of the "ten-twenty-thirty" attractions, of noble heroes, spotless heroines and very black villains. One afternoon, when a minor but essential character died without giving notice, Bobby and Bobby's college education were called upon to help the stage manager shift the lines. A natural knack at that sort of thing proved Bobby's prowess to such an extent that he was bequeathed a decrepit play to revamp into modern ways.

Thereupon Bobby emerged a playwright. He created noble heroes, spotless heroines, very black villains, gun persuasions, prison escapes, practicable cyclones and plausible shipwrecks in such quantity and variety that the melodrama came to a last golden flowering in Bobby Porland. "Tracked by Fire" was his; also, "The Hero of the Deadwood Mail;" also, "Lady Elaine, the Beautiful Errand Girl." With the passing of the thriller Bobby turned placidly to the crook *motif*, and his earnings of earlier days proved paltry beside the royalties from "Hicks All!" and many another drama of the virtues of the underworld.

In the meantime, he had married, and had grown older, so that now he was in the comfortable middle thirties, with plenty of money and nothing to worry him except Mrs. Porland's ambition that he do "something worth while" in a play.

It was really Bobby's unhappy profes-

sion which had kindled the fires of Mrs. Porland's soul. If he had remained in the business end of the theatrical game, she might have passed an endurable existence as the misunderstood but intellectual helpmeet of a commonplace business man. But Bobby had staked out his claim on the borderland of culture, thus forcing Mrs. Porland into a continuous martyrdom. ("Oh, yes, Mrs. Porland, the wife of the dramatist!" and then the lifted eyebrows, and, after her back was turned, the amused cynical smile.) If only Bobby's melodramas hadn't been so well known! If only he had never written "Lady Elaine, the Beautiful Errand Girl!" No wonder Mrs. Porland fretted at the stigma.

So, quite as natural evolution, he was driven to Art.

## II

IN spite of fragmentary notes, mainly dictated by Mrs. Porland, it was not till they returned from the Western trip that Bobby actually began work on his new venture.

"Carstein doesn't want me to do it; he says there's no money in it," he announced after a week of fruitless labour. "He's jumping crazy for another crook stunt like 'The Shadow Man.'"

Mrs. Porland was relentless. "He will find there is more money in artistically sound plays than in anything else. All you have to do is write one, and I know you can."

This assurance should have strengthened Bobby, but it did not. As in the preparation of his earlier efforts, he carefully dredged the newspapers for clippings that might aid his ingenuity in placing and marionetting his characters. But the clippings that he sorted threw no light on the play now in preparation. They would have been invaluable for one fathering noble heroes, spotless heroines, and very black villains; but Mrs. Porland had said:

"Your new play is to have nobody in it except human beings, and so please—*please* don't drag in any Jack Daltons, or Edward Throckmortons, or—or any Lady Elaines."



"But I—I just don't see the kind of play you do want me to write. I'm not interested in it; I can't visualize it. You want a play with emotion, with a vampire, with—"

"Not a vampire, you silly! A woman who's leading her own life."

"Well, then, a woman who's leading her own life. And you want to take a man who's perfectly satisfied and comfortable, and let this woman who's leading her own life come in and smash everything up. Now, I don't see any sense to that rigmarole. I can't understand why he should do it. Why does he want another woman? It looks a darned sight more unreasonable than all the Jack Dalton stuff ever written."

But Mrs. Porland only smiled with firm lips and wheedlingly held the match for his pipe.

By day Bobby sweated in his New York office, conscientiously reading Ibsen, Sudermann, Shaw, and all the Hungarians, Finns, and Russians on the list neatly prepared for him by his wife. Also he tried to think of various emotional people he had known, and what they had said when they were emoting. In desperation, he even purchased a miniature theater, "with lighting effects complete," and tiny dolls which could be moved about as characters in their progress from R. C. to L. U. E. But in spite of these aids to the dramatist, Bobby's play didn't get ahead.

At times when the strain became unbearable, he took to the open streets in the hope of overhearing some snatch of conversation that would set him on the right track. His good-natured face that had fastened upon him the genial name of "Bobby" lost its fresh, unworried look; people who were on the verge of saying "Bobby" ended with an apologetic "Mr. Porland." Even his laugh suffered; and Nat Goodwin himself had once said it was worth traveling from California just to tell Bobby a new story at the Players' Club and hear him laugh.

But the play eventually reached its final state of typewritten pages and a

blue cover. And on a certain September evening Bobby, his face drooping with all the eloquent lines of despair, entered his New York apartment.

"It's no good," he announced grumpily. "Carstein has seen it. I made him listen to me while I read it, too, and he says it's hopeless; that's the long and the short of it."

He flung on the table the bound script.

"Robert Porland!" His wife, hands grasping the lapels of his coat, looked squarely into his face. "I'm ashamed of you."

She picked up the despised play and ran over the pages.

"Why, oh, why didn't you let somebody help you? Don't you see you've done just the old thing over again. You haven't put life into it. It isn't convincing. Your heroine is only Lady Elaine, even if you do call her Mrs. Simmons. Let me think."

Helplessly Bobby frowned at the nearest Japanese print. It seemed as fragmentary and detached as his own mental state.

Mrs. Porland returned to the charge:

"Why don't you take the simple idea we decided on, and work it out just as simply? We said that there were three women in this man's life: his first 'kid' sweetheart, his wife, and the third woman. Now, instead of calling this 'Hidden Pools,' which gives it a sickly poetic flavour, why not call it 'The Third Woman'?"

"That's a good title," said Bobby, "but there haven't been three women in *my* life. And I haven't any sympathy with a man who falls for a third woman. You can call it melodrama or anything else you like, but I believe that people who do wrong get the worst of it every time."

"You're writing a play. Besides, there are exceptional instances."

"But I haven't any sympathy with the notion."

"Then you should talk with somebody who has." Mrs. Porland frowned slightly. Then her forehead again became smooth. "Robert, how long be-



fore 'The Shadow Man' goes on the road?"

Bobby reflected.

"It's run almost a year now. Carstein says it will be good for three months more."

"Then, Robert—"

"Yes?"

"Listen to me. When you do write your big play, Elsie Tenniel is to be the star. That's settled. And Elsie Tenniel is the one to help you write 'The Third Woman.' We shall open the house on Long Island and invite her down over Sunday. We can all talk it over together; then later, as it begins to unfold, you can talk it over with her."

Bobby made a last stand. "I don't want to talk it over with her. I tell you, I don't like stage people. I—"

"Sunday," interrupted Mrs. Porland. "And we'll motor down Saturday night after the play."

### III

THE holiday season had come and gone, and the annual crop of mushroom plays had sprung up only to be blown away to the immemorial store-house. There was no other first night in the Big City when "The Third Woman" made its bow to New York at Carstein's own theater.

From an obscure seat in the rear of the house, Mrs. Porland watched the gradual transformation of a supercilious audience that had come to jeer into an emotional unit that swayed with the fortunes of the painted men and women on the stage. Bobby Porland, manufacturer of cheap thrills for the cheap ones, had suddenly become a dramatist. And tomorrow Elsie Tenniel would no longer be a competent, hard-working actress, but the talk of theatrical New York.

There were tears in Mrs. Porland's own eyes over the bitter pathos of the first act; and when man and mistress sat down to reckon calmly the cost of their love (before the passionate climax that marked the second curtain), Mrs. Porland forgot that she was listening only to a tale of imaginary woe and

stress. The superb acting and self-control of Elsie Tenniel carried her away just as it carried away the blasé first-nighters. And when the end came, the end that made even hardened Broadway gasp, because there was no final reckoning, because the erring lovers had found and kept their paradise, Mrs. Porland knew that her husband had accomplished the task she set for him. He had written a play that was Art.

And Art it was, if the newspaper critics were to be trusted the next morning.

"Mr. Porland no longer manufactures alarm clocks to wake the sluggish"; commented the *American*; "instead, at the Carstein last night a very artistic boudoir timepiece of his patterning struck thirteen. Indeed, it is so artistic that one is inclined to forget the boudoir."

"If you must break the moral law," observed the *Tribune*, "The Third Woman" will show you how to accomplish your ends with the maximum of artistic effect."

"That there is no defense for the morals taught in this play is certain," the *Globe* decided, "but a majority will argue with some reason that if you do a thing beautifully it is its own excuse; and in Mr. Porland's new play there is no denying that he has done it beautifully. There is no questioning the sincerity of the piece. It has been written with a comprehension of the tremendous basic facts of life, a clear-seeing which has not commonly been credited to the dramatist in question. It is the product of wisdom and experience."

Later, in the theatrical columns of *Life*, "The Third Woman" was listed, "A salacious episode artistically handled."

And one and all of the critics went into rhapsodies over the work of the star, for her appeal in the famous second act had definitely stamped her as one of the best of the new school of emotional actresses. Her individual hit had been almost as great as that of the play.

It was the lure of the star that had



held Mrs. Porland's attention during the first performance. The play was her husband's, but she hugged the belief that the discovery of the girl was her own. Even the second night she spent watching Miss Tenniel's irresistible appeal to the villain-hero; the appeal that urged him from his dusty dry-rot to new life and fresh adventure.

But during the seventh performance of "The Third Woman," Mrs. Porland became quietly aware of something much more portentous. Quite unexpectedly it came to her that the character played by the male lead was not altogether unfamiliar. Words, even phrases, deepened the impression. The "hero" of the play was none other than—Bobby. In the drama he was tall and slender; he was not a successful playwright, but a struggling sculptor; he talked, not baseball, but poetry. Yet he was—Bobby. And the lady who lived her own life continued to live it—with Bobby.

Mrs. Porland attempted to think calmly. She wished to get up and leave, that she might argue the suspicions with herself, but the lure of seeing again the action unfold was too strong for her. With new, breathless interest she followed the fortunes of the pair through the tumultuous second act and the serene but unhallowed happiness of the third. She left the theater in a daze.

Bobby had not planned to accompany her home. After each performance he was busy planning minute changes in the stage business, he had told her.

She made her way alone to the apartment. The maid had already retired, but on the little table beside her bed Mrs. Porland found her accumulation of afternoon mail. There was the usual grist of announcements and conventional letters, together with others, more pleasant, which had begun coming with the success of "The Third Woman."

The Sunday editor of the *World* wanted her picture for a feature he was preparing on "Wives of Celebrated Men." A woman's club in Brooklyn would esteem it a great honour if she would address it on "Some Phases of

the Modern Drama." They knew of her reputation as a student of this literary form, and the fact that her husband was the creator of a masterpiece meant, they were certain, that a portion of its success, at least, was attributable to her influence. A little informal talk on the influence of the wife, etc.

Unheeded the letter dropped from her relaxed fingers.

An eager little soul from Greenwich Village had picked bizarre phrases to tell her what a wonderful woman she must be—it was "a pleasant coolth in a sun-stagnant world" to know that such "comrade-wives" as Mrs. Porland existed.

Mrs. Porland remembered that on the first night she had told some reporter that not only was she in complete sympathy with her husband's effort but that she had urged him to its completion. And this little fool from Greenwich Village had taken the play to be a transcript from their own lives.

A transcript! Was it?

Suddenly all the glory of the play's triumph turned to dust and ashes; for in winning the place to which she aspired she found that she had lost something better.

But had she lost? Wasn't it all just a sickly imagining? Bobby, dear old simple-souled Bobby—why, she couldn't have lost him! It was impossible. He had written well, of course, but it was absurd to suppose that in the writing he had drawn from his own experience. He had merely talked matters over with Elsie Tenniel, and out of her past had come the life-giving substance of the play.

Yes, it was Elsie Tenniel's play, not Bobby's. That was it. But Miss Tenniel must keep her place. Mrs. Porland would have to talk with Bobby, a nice frank talk, and she would tactfully suggest a trip to the South Seas. Bobby had always wanted to go to the South Seas. He still had childish ideas about cannibals and all that. Dear, stupid, sweet Bobby!

The telephone rang.

It was Carstein.



"Hello! That you, Mrs. Porland? I haven't seen Bobby all day; tried to get him at the theater, but they said he'd gone. No, nothing wrong. Just got a cable from London, and I'm leaving first thing in the morning. I'm telephoning from the docks."

"Is—is there some message I can give?"

"Not a message, Mrs. Porland. But I want you to keep Bobby working and make him turn out another play as good as 'The Third Woman.' That's all. You've got a young Shakespeare there, Mrs. Porland, if you can keep him at it. Say 'good-bye' to Bobby for me, and don't forget, Mrs. Porland, that I'm mighty grateful to you for coming in with a club and making me produce 'The Third Woman.' I never thought he had it in him."

Mrs. Porland waited.

The clock ticked the hour hand past twelve, past one, and within minutes of two.

Then Bobby.

"You've been sitting up for me?"

Unable for the moment to speak, she contented herself by nodding.

There was an uneasiness about him that she had not noticed before. He fumbled at his pockets; then, crossing the room, he stared fixedly at a little

water-colour on the wall. She noticed, as though for the first time, that the artist had limned with delicate pinks and greens an apple orchard in full bloom. It was appetizingly done. One could almost smell the wind of spring, capricious with the flood and energy of fresh youth.

In spite of her wish to allow him to speak first, she herself broached the subject.

"What is it, Bobby?"

He turned to her.

His eyes, which had once been the open books of his mind, were now narrowed and inscrutable.

"I'm sorry, but I—can't run down to Atlantic City with you Sunday, as we planned. I've just come from Carstein, and he says I must spend the week-end with him at his country place, talking over my new play. Sorry, but I've got to do it. I won't be back till late Monday."

For a full ten seconds he stared boldly at her, before he turned away to scrutinize once more the picture of the apple blossoms.

Mrs. Porland nodded again, though her husband's back was turned and he could not see her.

She did not protest. It was too late for anything of that sort.



THE compliments a woman hates are: Being called a "nice girl," being told her nose is "strong and characterful," and having a handsome man show her perfect respect in a taxicab.



THE average girl's idea of a hint is sitting close to the man, placing her face in the vicinity of his, pursing her lips and looking into his eyes expectantly.





# The Problem that Perplexed Nicholson

*By Elisabeth Sanxay Holding*

A VERY serious young man, was Nicholson. I have never met anyone so concerned, so morbidly concerned with abstract principles. I have the most vivid memories of him in those days before the war—days so immeasurably distant!—tramping along at my side, talking interminably about "ethics." It was his passion. He would call at my office and wait for me almost any length of time, if in the end he might be rewarded by walking home with me, to discuss what he called "an interesting point or so." He would have in his pocket little items he had cut out of the newspapers, cases that had come up in the police courts, and so on, which he wanted to analyze.

I rather dreaded him and his "ethics," and yet I never had the heart to cut short his lengthy propositions. I used to listen to him and even argue with him, very much as one might oblige a chess fiend by playing a game with him. Because the poor devil was so solitary and alone in the world; he hadn't, never had had, another friend, and he was always so outrageously sure of being welcome to me.

A lean, dour young Scot, he had made his own way in life, against every sort of obstacle; he had studied law and been called to the bar, and was then waiting for clients, living in a decent sort of poverty. He wasn't pitiful, in spite of the bleak youth behind him, and his equally bleak present, because he was so confident of success and so absolutely the sort to whom success is inevitable. He had no pleasures, no

recreations of any sort; never even read a novel, nothing but these ethical discussions.

The one thing that saved him was his utter lack of egoism. His ethical problems were never personal ones; he didn't even appear to be interested in himself. His questions were always general, and I must admit that his immense and guileless seriousness, combined with this lack of self-consciousness, touched me. And his ingenuousness. He was very fond of quoting judicial decisions and then, at great length, comparing what he called the legal with the ethical aspect. Myself a lawyer twenty years his senior, I never confounded the two.

Even the war, when it came, presented itself to Nicholson as an impersonal problem in ethics. Whether the situation justified the extreme measures he observed being taken?

"It's not a thing to think about," I told him. "One has to be satisfied with feeling. A question of the temperature of the blood, my boy; it doesn't concern the head."

"It's not that I'm—bloodless," he answered, gravely, "Simply that I wish to see the right of the thing. I don't intend to be carried away by rash sentimentality."

Rash he surely was not: for weeks and weeks he came to me almost daily, to argue the ethics of war, until I revolted. I called him morbid, unwholesome, abnormal, said he was unfit, couldn't adjust himself to an actual world. That shut him up. He had



nothing to say in his own defense. He kept his ethical doubts to himself for some time.

In the end I suppose he came to some general conclusion satisfactory to himself, for he no longer questioned the war. He said that we must win it, at any cost. And then, of course, came the personal problem. Ought he to enlist?

He discussed that with me, candidly. Could he serve his country better by remaining at home and pursuing his profession, for which he had been preparing for years and years, or by going to fight? I let him talk; he never asked for advice, and wouldn't have got it anyway. It was certainly not for me to argue for or against the indispensability of lawyers.

I could see that he was very much distressed, and he caused me no little distress, too, for he came to my office in season and out of season, sitting patiently in the outer room until I had time for him.

It disturbed me beyond measure to know he was waiting there, with his problems. He had always plenty of cases to cite—things he had read—about conscientious objectors. *Were* they conscientious? he wanted to know. And only sons, fathers of dependent families, and so on, who were prompt to enlist, were they ethically justified in so doing?

"The question is," he insisted earnestly, "how can one serve one's country best?"

"The country may thank its fate that all its men aren't so squeamish," I said.

"Squeamish!" he repeated, hurt and surprised. "I don't think it's that."

"That and the other complaint of your generation," I went on, "A strained anxiety to stand out from the herd. I'll wager you'll decide on the unpopular course as the ethical one, just because it is unpopular."

"You're wrong," he assured me, solemnly, "altogether wrong. Simply, I don't care to be swayed by enthusiasm instead of guided by reason."

"I'd go," I said, "if I weren't too old to be taken."

"Ah!" said he, "but, you see, you *are* too old. You haven't any problem. It's been settled *for* you."

In the due course of time he solved his problem, decided that, ethically, he ought to volunteer, did so, and was accepted. Evidently that relieved him; he seemed even cheerful in a sober way.

He went through his training well enough. I had postcards from him now and then, and I gained an impression of him, solemnly busy and as friendless as ever.

Then he was sent to the front, and came to say good-bye to me. In his uniform, lean and stiff, with the air of sober satisfaction, he had a sort of Cromwellian look about him. A good fighter, I fancied he would be, inclined toward fanaticism.

I felt sorry for him; not afraid so much that he would be killed or wounded, but that his orderly and inquiring young mind would be overwhelmed by what he was to see. He would find it very difficult, I thought, to discover what was the ethical course to pursue, and when he had found it, he would no longer be free to follow it.

It is so very rarely that we can watch people change. They live and live; nothing happens; external events harass without compelling, nothing occurs furious enough to compel a soul. People grow a little, intensify, become more and more themselves. Thus, in the usual course of events, would Nicholson become more Nicholson; I expected nothing different. Unless his soul were to be maimed or stupefied in that inferno to which he had gone.

## II

I HEARD from him now and then, post cards, to thank me for tobacco and papers, quite impersonal things which gave me no sort of clue as to what the war was doing to him. I thought of him often enough, and not without anxiety; I imagined painful ethical struggles.



As soon as he got his first home leave, he came directly to me, walked into my office and sat down, quite in the old way to wait until I wasn't busy.

No evolution there. He was absolutely unchanged.

Yes, he said, he'd seen some fairly rotten things, but what could you expect? A fellow wasn't a schoolgirl. Yes, the life was pretty crude, but you got used to that. Couldn't say he'd been exactly frightened, but confoundedly nervous and shaky. Glad to be home—poor devil without any sort of home—but it wasn't altogether a bad sort of life out there. He confessed that it was rather a relief to have no ethical decisions to make; you simply did as you were told.

"It's restful," he said, "and yet it isn't demoralizing as it would be if you voluntarily let go."

He was unable to describe this new existence; he told me what he did, but he couldn't convey the flavour. And he preferred to talk about home affairs, the ethics of conscription, of hoarding, of rationing. He thought a great deal about such things, he said.

He went back quite cheerfully. He had an idiotic sort of optimism, of courage, whichever you please. He wasn't resolved to endure anything that might happen; he was simply sure that nothing *could* happen to him.

He wrote once or twice, and then stopped; didn't answer my letters or acknowledge packages sent him. His name was not among the wounded, missing or killed, and I didn't care to risk annoying him by writing for information. I could only wait with an anxiety a little surprising, for I hadn't realized what a place he held with me. There wasn't a day that winter when I shouldn't have been glad, remarkably glad, to discuss ethics with him.

Suddenly he appeared; came walking into my room at dusk on a wretched April afternoon. It was too dark to see well, but his grave salutation was enough.

"By Jove!" I cried, with the irrational irritation one always feels when

there wasn't any cause for worry after all, "What's been the matter? I haven't heard a word. . . ."

"I know," he interrupted, sombrely, "I'm sorry. I'm very wet and chilly. Anything to drink. . . ."

I rang for hot water, and lighted the gas. Nicholson had sat down in my particular chair near the fire, but he kept his head averted. There was something strange about him, his voice even. . . .

I hesitated to question him, but while he was swallowing his steaming toddy, I took a good look at him. And I saw that now he was changed, very much changed. He didn't look ill; he was as lean and tough as ever; it was a sort of shadow that lay over his face, a new, grim look of perplexity, as if he faced an ethical problem beyond his comprehension. I had heard and read of the unaccountable ways in which the war affected men's nerves, and I was half inclined to think that he was struggling with one of those sudden attacks of funk.

He was unusually quiet, sat there, glass in hand, looking into the fire. He asked me, politely, if I'd been well; *he* had been, he assured me, never better in his life. The weather over there, though, got on your nerves, rain and mud and cold. He apologized for not having answered my letters.

"And I shouldn't have dropped in on you like this," he said; "it might have been inconvenient, I know. . . . But, to tell you the truth, I didn't expect to see you this time at all. I—I've been in the city almost a week now."

I was disproportionately hurt.

"A love affair, of course," I thought, but he went on.

"You see, I'm here on a—rather wretched business. Have to find a fellow's wife and tell her about his—about how—about his dying."

"One wouldn't expect that to take a week."

"I know, only I can't find her. He gave me the address, but she's not there; never has been. One Hundred and Fourteen Andrew Street, he told



me. I've gone all over the neighborhood, looked up all the streets with names anything like Andrew—but it's no good."

I was moderately sympathetic.

"Mistaken somewhere, of course," I said, "but she'll have had a notice from the government by this time, or have read it in the papers."

"Not the details. . . . You see—" He stopped.

"Perhaps she's better off without the details," I suggested at random, and was surprised at the look he gave me. I shouldn't have been astonished to see him cry. His face was crimson, his eyes full of tears.

"It's not a light matter," he said, passionately, and after a pause, "you see . . . they—it looked as if—they had suspected him of being—that is, not officially, but it was talked of. . . . They said he deserted. . . . He was mentioned as missing."

"He may turn up later."

"No; he's dead."

"How do you know?"

He didn't answer that.

I was uneasy, a little annoyed at something inexplicable in the affair. It was, taking his nature into consideration, entirely consistent that he should feel ethically bound to continue his search for his dead friend's wife. But who was his friend, though? He'd never spoken, never written of any friend. A wrong address, a mysterious friend, a still more mysterious death.

"There's something behind it," I said to myself; "he's done something idiotic."

He broke a long silence.

"I've found another place to try," he said. "A 'Miss' Alice Corbett. Very likely it's 'Mrs.' Alice was her name, you know."

"Have you written yet, or communicated in any way?"

"No," he answered reluctantly, "I thought—perhaps—you'd care to come with me?"

I agreed, but after that he seemed in no hurry to go. He sat by the fire

smoking, very silent. It grew quite dark, and I suggested that if we were to go before dinner. . . .

"I—I—to tell you the truth," he said, impulsively, "I hate like the devil to do it!"

"A bit harrowing," I admitted, "although she'll certainly have heard of her husband's death long ago. But look here," I added, "don't be—an ethical ass. If there's anything unpleasant you think she *ought* to know, for heaven's sake, keep it to yourself. Leave her in peace, and him."

"It's nothing of that sort!" he said vehemently, "I want to contradict any unfavorable impression she may possibly have got—or ever may get. You see, I want—I *ought*, you know, to let her—to tell her that he died like a hero. She'll simply have read that he's missing."

"How did he die then?"

"Oh! A—a sort of accident. I've thought it all out. I'm going to tell her that the snipers got a friend of his, and that he—he went out alone, against orders, to pot a few Boches, as a sort of revenge, and got his. Died at once. Women will believe anything, won't they?"

My legal experience didn't confirm that idea. I smiled a little.

"She's been very ill," he went on, "she may not be alive now. But if she is, I want—I *ought* to give her what comfort I can. Any sort of lie, if it will help the poor woman."

"But how did he really die?" I insisted.

Nicholson didn't answer. I delayed a moment to turn out the gas, and then followed him to the door. I had my hand on the knob, when his voice sounded abruptly from the darkness of the hall.

"I killed him," he said.

### III

It was exactly like a blow, a physical blow. I wanted to sit down and close my eyes, while I recovered.

"An accident," I murmured.



"Come on!" he said, "It's growing late!"

I followed him into the rainy street, and he immediately took my arm.

"I'd better tell you," he said, in a very low voice. "You see—it's almost *too* much—in fact—one can't always decide—alone. I don't know—can't tell—if it's a—a crime . . ."

"Go ahead!" I encouraged him.

After a minute he began, very painstakingly.

"I didn't really notice him even when he first came out. Morose sort of fellow—not popular at all—big, dark, heavy chap with long eyes like a weasel. He didn't try to make any friends, kept to himself as much as he could, and was eternally writing letters home. Very slack, too, always in trouble over his equipment, and so on. It wasn't so much laziness; he simply *couldn't* look decent. You know the sort. Loose kind of figure, always had a—a *blurred* look.

"All of a sudden he began running after me. Without the least encouragement on my part, I can promise you. In fact, I rather disliked him. I got horribly sick of him, hanging about in his skulking way. I couldn't get rid of him, he was at my heels all the time. I couldn't make it out at all; he didn't want to talk, he never asked me questions or told me about himself. He was like one of those stray dogs that follow you, you know. . . . Poor beggar! I was sorry for him, somehow. . . .

"One day he sat down beside me and began telling me in a whisper that he wouldn't stand it any longer, he'd have to go home. Lots of fellows feel like that, though, now and then. I didn't pay much attention, but he caught hold of my sleeve and began to mutter:

"*I must go! I must go!*"

"What's up?" I asked him.

"He said his wife was ill, very ill. He'd applied for leave and been refused. I told him the reason for that was that there'd probably be an engagement before long.

"*I must go!*" he kept on. "What can I do?"

"*'Nothing!'*" I told him. "But buck up and be a man. You have to expect this sort of thing, in war time. Damned hard, of course."

"He began telling me about his wife then, and it was—really, old man, it was—extraordinary. You wouldn't have imagined him capable of it. . . . He—he made you fairly see the poor little woman—only nineteen, she was, and there was a baby coming. She wasn't expected to pull through. I've never been—never cared for a woman like that myself, but I can understand it. It was—really a—a beautiful thing, his devotion. She was all he had, all he cared about. He only wanted to see her, once more, and then get himself killed. He said he had no use for life at all if he lost her.

"The next day he showed me letters, one from the doctor, and one from the girl herself. It was the most pitiful thing. . . . Wanted to see him once more. You could tell that she was afraid to die, although she tried to be plucky. He was almost mad.

"*'For God's sake, tell me what to do!'*" he kept asking me. "I can't let her die without even saying good-bye to her. Do you think any cause in the world is worth the agony she is suffering?"

"I could understand his point of view, but I couldn't see any way out. There wasn't the slightest chance of his getting leave at that time. All leaves had been stopped, no exceptions, absolutely. Something big in the air. . . .

"I—really, the beastly business—really haunted me. I—it almost seemed as if—it weren't—well, worth it, you know. Made you realize what war did. . . . Anything so damnably cruel—you know—didn't seem so—elevating, after all."

Nicholson was growing incoherent; he saw it, and stopped for a bit.

"But I couldn't help him," he went on at last. "Tried to cheer him up, and all that. He'd shut me up every time. 'Think of it!' he'd shout. 'That poor little girl dying, *alone*. That terror and agony, all alone. If she could only hold



my hand, she says, she wouldn't mind.' Well, you can imagine. . . . I hadn't thought much of that side of the thing before—the women at home, you know. . . . He was really a bit off—raved, absolutely. But you could understand. He told me all about her, what a plucky little soul she'd been. I wish I could make you see him; you could understand the thing so much better. Big, hulking, stupid sort of ass, quite isolated, no one liked him, men or officers. A rotten bad soldier, altogether out of place. No energy, no alertness. He *couldn't* be trained. And I imagine he'd been the same sort of failure in civil life. There was only this girl. *She'd* seen something good and—lovable in him, something no one else would ever see."

He stopped again.

"If I could only make you see—a little," he continued, earnestly. "I'd like you to understand it *all*, if possible. . . .

"It was one afternoon when I'd been sent to a farmhouse—sort of headquarters back of the lines, with a message, and he came running after me. Said he'd got permission to come along. He was out of breath at first, and I suppose the dust choked him; he held on to my arm and stumbled along without a word for half a mile. Then he said:

"'You've got to do it!'

"'What?' I asked him.

"'You're a first-class shot,' he whispered. 'Shoot me!'

"I was shocked.

"'You want me to kill you?' I said. 'You're mad!'

"'No, not that. But a wound, in the arm, just enough . . . so I can get home before it's too late.'

"I shook him off, swore at him, I think. I called him a coward, everything. But he stumbled along beside me, telling me I'd have to do it.

"He made me read another letter he'd got. . . . He was crying—tears running down his dirty face, and gasping and sobbing. . . .

"I give you my word, you've no idea how that sort of thing upsets you.

Then he—actually got down on his knees. . . . I was disgusted with him—but—awfully sorry for him. In the end I said I'd do it.

"I went on to deliver my message, and told him to wait for me near a marsh I had to cross. . . . I don't know, to this minute, old man, whether I was right or wrong in consenting. Whether humanity isn't after all a higher—"

"Never mind ethics!" I interrupted. "Let's hear what you did."

He went on.

"When I came back it was growing dark, and I wanted to put it off. I couldn't see properly. But he wouldn't wait.

"It was a very lonely place—that marsh—with a sort of plank walk across it that made a short cut from one part of the high road to the other; saved almost half a mile. We could have seen anyone coming, a long way off, in that flat country. We stopped there and talked it over. We were going to put it down to snipers. He'd thought out a whole story, very plausible. He showed me the exact spot to be hit on his arm, and he tied a white handkerchief over it, so that I shouldn't miss it in the dusk.

"He was to stand on the high road, where he could see anyone coming along the road behind me, and I was to go a few paces along the plank walk over the marsh, where I could see the road to the trenches. I tried even then to argue with him. I pointed out that the thing might easily be discovered and we'd both be court-martialed. But he said he'd risk that, and that I'd already promised. So—!

"'I'll hold out my arm,' he told me. 'And don't fire too near; there mustn't be any powder burns.'

"My hand wasn't steady; I warned him of that, but he said he didn't care. He was quite cool, all his hysteria gone. He was simply anxious to get it over.

"'Come on!' he kept urging. 'It's growing dark!' and it was. I could see the white handkerchief plainly enough, but the dusty road looked like a blur,



and there was a sort of mist over the marsh. It's such a flat country, you know, it—somehow seems lonelier than the mountains. . . .

"There he stood, with his arms stretched out. I couldn't see his face any longer.

"Quick!" he said. And I fired.

"I don't know how I did it. . . . I didn't realize at first that I'd missed; I thought it was all right. I called out to ask him but he didn't answer. He came running forward in a queer, blind way, along the plank bridge toward me. Then all of a sudden he stumbled and fell like a log into the marsh.

"I ran up and got him by the collar, and tried to pull him out, but he was a dead weight. . . . I must have got him through the lung, I think. He . . . he made an awful sound. . . .

"After a bit I got his head and shoulders on the boards, but his legs were sunk deep in the swamp. Anyway it didn't matter; in a minute he was dead.

"I let him slip back and he disappeared in the mud. I went on alone. No one asked me about him. . . .

"That's all," he added, abruptly.

#### IV

His story was finished; he had nothing further to say.

He fell silent, an aloof sort of silence which invited no comment. He wished evidently to meditate on this lamentable history; perhaps he was seeking in it some justification for himself, or for that other fellow.

I am not, I dare say, very different from the mass of mankind; any sort of misfortune irritates me. And while at heart I was sorry for him and for his victim, and for the poor woman, I was not just then conscious of any such emotion. I rebelled against our errand.

"And you're going to tell his wife that he died a hero?" I asked. "It's monstrous, farcical."

"No," he answered. "I've thought it all out. It's the only atonement I can make."

One had to admire his courage in

facing this woman, under the circumstances. There was something in his ethics, after all! I strode along beside him through the rainy streets, resentfully respectful.

We reached the house; he walked briskly up the steps, rang the bell, waited, rang again.

"I hope it isn't too late," he whispered.

Immediately I had a picture of the unhappy girl lying dead, somewhere in that dark and silent house, or perhaps dying, weak and gasping, at this instant. He didn't grasp at this straw as I should have done, as a chance of relief from an intolerable situation; no; he really wanted to see her, to tell her his flaming lie, to "atone" as he put it, for his horrible error.

At last the door opened.

"Well!" said a woman's voice, good-humoredly.

Nicholson asked for "Mrs. Frank Corbett."

"I suppose you mean me, sir," she answered. "Step in, please."

And we followed her down a passage to a musty little sitting room. She turned up the gas.

"Sit down, please, gentlemen," she said, and herself remained standing in the doorway, looking at us anxiously.

She was an angular, middle-aged woman with a severe face and luminous, patient eyes, one of those faces seen only among the poor, expressing such limitless endurance. Not resistance, not resignation, simply endurance, like a rock on which all the storms beat.

"I'm trying to find Mrs. Frank Corbett," Nicholson explained. "I'm afraid it's another mistake. I'm sorry we've troubled you—"

"If it's news about Frank—Francis William Corbett, in the Blank regiment," she said, "I'm his sister. And . . . I got that notice—long ago."

She was struggling painfully to keep back her tears while she addressed herself to Nicholson's uniform. "If it's a—a last message, gentlemen, I'm the



one that's entitled to hear it. I'm his sister, and his next of kin."

"But I've a—a personal message for his wife," said Nicholson, gently.

"He never had a wife," she answered. "I'm the next of kin, sir. I'm really entitled to—the message . . ."

She had begun to weep quietly.

"Frank never had a wife," she repeated. "Never any one in the world but me. If there's any news, gentlemen, I've a right to hear it. Me and no one else. Missing—that's all they've told me. . . ."

"I'm afraid," said Nicholson, gravely, "that he must have contracted a marriage unknown to you. I've seen letters from his wife—"

The woman shook her head.

"Not *my* Frank. Not Francis William Corbett in the Blank regiment. Not *him*, sir."

And she took a photograph from the chimney piece and held it out to Nicholson. He stared at it with shocked eyes.

"That's he . . . I'm sorry—very sorry. But in war time—extenuating circumstances . . ." he murmured. "No doubt it was a very hasty marriage—"

"He *couldn't* have been married," she insisted. "Why, he lived in this very house all his life; he never stopped out a single night, nor hardly ever missed a meal. Don't you think *I'd* have known? And him and me . . ."

She wiped her eyes roughly.

"And what's more, he never made more than two pounds a week, and he gave it all to me, except it might be two or three shillings he'd keep out."

We were silent. She waited; then went on:

"I've made up my mind to losing him. This 'missing,' it's the worst of all. I know he's dead, or I'd have heard more. Only, it would do one good to know a bit about it—how it happened. . . . And that's what you came for, isn't it, sir? That you were going to tell his wife, only he hadn't one?"

"Yes," said Nicholson solemnly. "He died a hero."

She was extraordinarily pleased.

"Ah!" she cried. "A hero, was he? Poor Frank!"

Nicholson plunged into his story. He had evidently rehearsed it well, for he was so fluent as to be almost unconvincing; very circumstantial, vivid, a tale of reckless bravery and a memorable death.

"Of course this is unofficial, you know. He'd disobeyed orders so—they couldn't give him any recognition. But I—as his friend—he had mentioned a wife—"

Miss Corbett shook her head and wiped her eyes again.

"I can't think however *that* got about. Poor Frank! A regular hero . . . and me—all the time! It goes to show how easy it is to misjudge others. . . . Poor Frank! I'm sure I never expected it of him."

Her tears began to flow again, and she pressed her handkerchief against her mouth.

"Oh, gentlemen!" she cried, "I feel—I've been cruel—and now it's too late . . . ! I can't make it up to him, never, never!"

"I'm very sorry," said Nicholson, feebly, "Very sorry. I thought—you see—"

"Oh, I'm glad enough to hear about it!" she interrupted, "and it'll be a comfort to me my life long, that I can be *proud* of him. But I'd misjudged him so!"

"He never was—what you'd call a—hero. Always nervous and timid like. Wouldn't take his own part when the other boys'd badger him. You see, gentlemen, I brought him up from a baby . . . and it's so easy to misjudge them you know too well. . . . I'd been fighting that—weakness in him for so many years—"

"And when the war came, it seemed he was hanging back. Mrs. Cooke's boy from the next door, he enlisted, and my cousins, too, and the young man from 61—a fair dozen from this street. I was sort of ashamed, Frank being so strong. I was at him day and night. Don't you want to serve your King and your country? Where's your man—"



hood? And he'd put me off, and say he wanted time to think it over.

"Then, one afternoon, he went to Uncle Gibbs's. Their second boy was leaving the next day, and they had wine. Frank wasn't used to it. It must have gone to his head, like, and all the talk about the army. . . . Anyhow, he came home late, red as a lobster and talking very loud. 'Well,' he says, 'I've done it! I've enlisted!'

"He went through his training, right enough, and started off to the front as jolly as you please. Told me that he liked the life. But as soon as ever he got out there, he wrote me a letter. 'It's—' excuse me, gentlemen, 'it's hell,' he wrote. 'I'll lose my mind. I can't stand it. Make an excuse,' he says, 'Write that you're very sick so I can get leave.'

"Well, after a bit, I did, and he came home. He was in a terrible way, so nervous he couldn't sleep nor eat. He owned up, frank enough, that he wanted to desert. But I wouldn't give him any peace. I frightened and I shamed him into going back. You'll be caught sure enough and shot, I told him. Isn't that better, says he, than having your—your insides torn out by shrapnel, or half your face shot off?

"And I—you see, I didn't understand then—I called him a coward and—well, he went back. But he was soon writing again. 'Get me home somehow, for God's sake! Get me home, or I'll go mad!' I wrote him I couldn't and wouldn't if I could. Stick it out like a man, I says. Then one more letter from him—fair crazy, it was—and I never heard again."

She looked at us with solemn, tearful eyes.

"And he must have made up his mind to make the best of it after all," she added. "It all goes to show you never

can tell what's in a man. Poor Frank a hero!"

Once again she dried her eyes, and turned to Nicholson.

"It'd be a great comfort to me if you'd kindly tell it all to me again, sir," she said. "You did make it seem so beautiful!"

The poor fellow turned quite pale. I was really sorry for him, having to tell that yarn again, knowing what he knew now. He did it, splendidly, though, and we rose to take our leave.

The poor woman pressed Nicholson's hand fervently.

"Thank you, sir! Thank you!" she said, and had no words to express anything more.

But her luminous, patient eyes told her gratitude, her consolation, her sorrowful, remorseful pride in her hero brother.

## V

WE were out in the rain again, going home, at a terrific pace set by my ethical young friend. He was silent. I tried to be, but couldn't!

"So there wasn't any wife!" I said, with a sort of malice.

"No," he answered, sombrely. "It seems there wasn't. No; I was—deceived, I suppose."

"You were!" I assured him, "A lie, the letters, and the pathos, and the devotion, all of it. A preposterous lie, invented by a coward to get himself away from the trenches, to save his own precious skin. But a not very successful device, was it, considering how it ended!"

Nicholson walked on, a bit more slowly.

"Well," he said, after a very long pause, "it's a very difficult problem. . . . But—do you know . . . I'm damned glad I killed the poor devil. . . ."





# Étude for the Organ

B-Flat Major, Allegro Rubato

By Felden E. Milbrite

AMERICA'S fourth greatest musician and I were walking along upper Broadway. I shall not tell you his name, but you would recognize it at once, if you are a musician. If not, open your *Sunday Tribune* to the music page and glance over the programs for the coming week. The name which appears among the composers of songs on at least three of them is that of the man I mention.

You would never take him for a composer. He is large and fat and plain-looking. Some say he is more of a critic than a composer. I know his compositions, and have heard him improvise by the hour on one of the most magnificent organs in New York City, and I say unto you, he is a composer.

We went to a moving-picture show.

Lest you reply that celebrities do not go to moving-picture shows, let me state that they do. Thomas A. Edison may be seen at the Palace Theater, Orange, almost any night. A theatrical star whose name may be read six blocks from the theater on a clear night goes with her mother whenever she gets a chance. Douglas Fairbanks would go if he wasn't so busy.

We saw an old picture, but a pretty good one. I don't mind telling you what it was. It was Mary Pickford in "Hearts Adrift." She plays the part of a little girl who is shipwrecked and grows up on a desert island without ever coming into contact with a human being, like Mowgli in the Jungle.

They had a good organ in that second-rate theater; a better one than in

many first-rate churches; which proves what it proves.

But the organist, as we discovered after listening for five minutes, was either very incompetent or had run completely dry. He kept playing the same succession of chords over and over. Every now and then would come a sudden spurt of energy, but not strong enough to carry him out of the rut he was in, and the same old succession of chords. He had probably been playing for five hours.

When he finally leaned over and began to fumble with some sheet music that lay on the floor, with his left hand, at the same time repeating a five-finger exercise with his right over and over (as though the picture would stop were he to cease playing) I was struck with an idea.

"I say, Walt," said I (that is not his right name), "what do you say we go down and *you* play a while?"

Walt sniffed contemptuously, but I could see he had had the same idea.

"Come on," I whispered. "This picture is pretty good stuff. See what you can do with it."

"You go down and ask him," said Walt finally, with the bashfulness of genius.

I stole down the dark aisle and descended into the organ pit, to the amazement of the performer, whose look said as plain as day, "I know it's awful, but if you don't like it, why don't you go home?"

"Go right on playing," I said, flattering him most vilely. "I've got a friend



up in the audience who is an organist—don't you want to be relieved for a little while?"

Here is where those of you who know not human nature and who guess that he replied, "Oh, thank you, kind sir," or words to that effect, show your ignorance. There never was a hen yet that did not run itself to exhaustion trying to outrace a motor-car, before retiring to one side as an admission that the car could, after all, go faster. This poor devil was greasy with fatigue. He sat on a cushion, and had almost worn a hole in it. Yet he referred me, in the grandest manner imaginable, to the manager of the theater.

Having embarked on a venture, however trivial, I never go back.

I saw the manager, who seemed puzzled, and wavered between caution and politeness.

"You don't understand," I said. "This man is a—a great organist."

"That's what they all say," was the weary reply. "But there's not many people here, so go ahead—I don't care if the organist don't!"

I went back to America's fourth greatest musician and told him that organist and manager would be delighted and honoured to have him perform.

So we went down, both of us, to the pit, and the organist, reluctantly, suspiciously, surrendered his seat.

Again you will say, "Ah, he went out for a walk, and got some fresh air."

Nothing of the sort. He hovered in the background, like a dispossessed tenant, and rummaged around his music cabinet. Finally he produced a grimy paper-covered collection of moving-picture classics—evidently his New Testament—and put it on the rack in front of Walt, who had begun softly to try out the stops.

"There's some good music in that," said the professional, plainly insinuating. "Bet you can't play it."

"Don't want it—don't want it," snapped Walt, impatiently. Once at the organ, he had become interested, in spite of himself.

"Don't he read music?" whispered the regular to me, suspiciously.

"He does and he doesn't. He writes it—makes it up."

"Oh, faking, you mean. I do that a lot myself."

Receiving no reply, he retired to his music cabinet.

It was a good picture for music. Desert sands, with the little Pickford, representing a girl who had never seen a man, and did not know what one was, doing a wild, barefoot dance, ignorant of the fact that a castaway was watching her. The man, peering at her from behind a rock, no doubt half believing her to be a nymph or a goddess. Who wouldn't? She came perilously close to being one.

It got my friend, as I knew it would. He loosened up, and the furious dance-music of Grieg mingled with "A la Russe" by Schuette and the last movement of the Mendelssohn violin concerto. It was a good organ, and as Mary and her newly discovered man became friends, and then lovers, he wandered all over musical creation, from Schubert's songs to César Franck's violin sonata; from Brahms' quintet to themes out of Goldmark's symphonies. When the two lovers kneeled down on the sands, solemnly, and married each other (there being no other human on the island) he took the angel music from "Hansel und Gretel" and wove it into a rhapsody that would have done credit to Humperdinck himself.

He played for an hour—until the picture was over; and would have gone on but for the impatience of the professional to resume his job.

"I'm paid to play here," he explained, almost gruffly, as he resumed his place. "As long as I'm paid, I'm supposed to play."

And he vigorously attacked the "Souvenir" by Drdla, on Page 16 of his collection.

Walt was half way up the aisle, but I hesitated a moment.



"Well," I said, "what do you think of my friend's playing?"

"Too churchy. He'd have the people walking out of the theater in a week. Playing chords all the time. Too much organ effect."

"Why," I asked, astonished in spite of myself, "don't you want an organ effect on an organ?"

"Not for pictures. You want orchestra effect. Like this—listen—get the difference?"

I beat a hasty retreat, and ran across the manager in the lobby.

"Did you hear him?" I asked. "Did you hear him play?"

"Did I hear him? Why, it almost blew me out of the theater! You could hear him across the street, he was playing so loud. I would have come down and told him, but I was too busy. You see," he added, to soften the sting of his rebuke, "that's why we have to be careful—letting strangers play on that organ. Why, that organ cost—that organ cost—"



## Light Love

*By Leslie Nelson Jennings*

BETTER the lost endeavour  
Of Love that lasts a day  
Than to have lived, and never  
Have thrown a kiss away!

Better the tears and sorrows  
Of Love that laughs and goes,  
Than dreams and dim tomorrows,  
Than last year's ravelled rose!

Better the light romances,  
Better their passing pain;  
Better the Joy that dances  
Than music played in vain!

Better the Love that grieves us  
For one, tumultuous hour!—  
Better the Love that leaves us  
Before the sweet turns sour!



SOME people think you can tell a woman's age by her face, others by her hair; but as a matter of fact it is usually told by some other woman's tongue.





# La Fête Chez Griffotte

By Gaston Roupnel

DEPUIS longtemps déjà, Griffotte avait l'habitude de venir prendre de bons repas chez son ami Chassagne. Il arrivait le dimanche matin, avec sa femme, la grosse Marie, qui s'en retournait encore plus grosse le soir, et passait le reste de la semaine à digérer, tandis que Griffotte se préparait l'appétit. Aussi, la Marie était-elle grasse à n'en plus finir. Griffotte, lui, était un vrai rustre, bâti en fil de fer, avec une mâchoire à broyer l'acier, et des yeux ardents comme deux fous en feu. Vous pensez s'il exploitait ce pauvre Chassagne! . . . Celui-ci était la bonté même. "Rien qu'en lui ajoutant deux jaunes d'œuf—disaient les gens—on en ferait de la vraie brioche!" Une vraie bête à bon Dieu, quoi! Mais comme il était trop gros pour faire le métier de coccinelle, il restait assis sur son banc, avec un air d'être toujours prêt à payer la bière à n'importe qui.

A force de dîner chez Chassagne, Griffotte avait fini par l'inviter:

—Te viendras! . . . lui disait-il souvent, te viendras, Chassagne, passer chez nous une journée remplie de volailles rôties! . . . Te viendras manger le "côtis" de porc! . . . Te viendras te régaler de laitage. Pas du laitage à la façon dijonnaise, où la vache est escamotée, et où l'eau de puits fait le gros de la sauce. Ces sacrées laitières de ville . . . il leur faudrait un gendarme près de chaque bidon! Chassagne, te viendras boire le vrai lait sorti de la vraie vache! . . . Et dès que t'auras mis le nez dans les pots, te voudras y rester la tête dedans toute ta vie! . . .

A force d'invitations de ce genre, on convint que Chassagne viendrait à la fête du pays. Et Chassagne y alla, pardi! . . .

S. Set—Aug.—9

Il arriva au petit matin, juste au moment où Griffotte parlait d'aller prendre de l'appétit avec des blés à lier qui pressaient fort. Ce serait tout à fait l'affaire de Chassagne de s'en mêler. "Tu n'as pas peur des blés . . . au moins? . . .", lui demanda Griffotte. Non, Chassagne n'avait pas peur des blés. Mais il songeait vaguement à boire un verre de vin blanc. Mais cela resta une idée vague. Car Griffotte prétendait "que le vin blanc . . . c'est bien blanc": et il faisait le dégouté.

On partit donc lier les blés.

C'était l'aube. L'éternelle aurore scintillait une fois de plus sur le vieux monde d'Homère et des hommes. Les routes piétinées enfonçaient leurs lointains songeurs sur des collines où le matin rayonnait comme l'enfance du monde. Un rouge et pur soleil s'échappait du sol rigide. Et les champs mouillés de la terre semblaient prendre essor dans un ciel délivré. . . .

Griffotte triomphait:

—Eh bien! Cadet! . . . La voici . . . la vraie fête du pays! . . . Regarde voir si la contrée n'a pas l'air de faire sa première communion! . . . Voilà ce que j'aime, tiens: travailler sous les rayons neufs du matin! . . . D'autant plus qu'il y a de l'argent à gagner avec eux! . . . Mais toi, feignant, tu préférerais boire la bière dans les cafés! . . .

Bientôt, on arriva dans le champ, et on commença de lier. Chassagne, qui était bedonnant, avait de la peine à maîtriser les gerbes pour les ceinturer du lien. "Oué là! . . ." faisait-il. Griffotte le rabrouait:

—T'as pas le coup! . . . T'as l'air de te faire rosser! . . . Bon sang! Montre-leur donc que t'es un homme!



... Ah! on voit bien que les blés ne t'ont jamais intéressé que quand ils étaient en miche! ... Et s'il n'y avait que des hommes comme toi en France, il ne faudrait y manger que les trous de la miche, pas plus! ...

Chassagne fit de son mieux. Mais il n'allait pas vite. Griffotte l'encourageait:

—Allons! Chassagne! ... Fais un peu de vitesse! ... Vois: le soleil gagne sur nous! ...

—Pardi! répondait le pauvre Chassagne. Rien ne le gêne, lui! ... Tandis que moi, j'ai soif! ...

—Ah! ... Eh bien! Chassagne! Tu vois là-bas un petit arbre mignon? ... Eh bien! au pied de tout cela, il y a une bonne eau fraîche qui court! ... Dépêche-toi vite d'aller la rattraper! ...

Un peu après avoir bu, Chassagne se plaignit d'être malade:

—Ah! geignait-il, tu m'as fait boire de l'eau, et tu sais cependant que je ne la digère pas! ...

—Oh! En plein air, tout passe. Tu verras le goûter! ...

—On ne goûte donc pas à la maison, fit Chassagne avec inquiétude.

—Non! ... On va manger ici pour être plus à son aise. D'ailleurs, rien que de respirer ce grand air-ci, c'est déjà nourrissant. Et on pourrait même se passer de boulanger. Mais puisque t'en as l'habitude. ...

On goûta sur l'herbe. Chassagne trouva le lard rance. Griffotte se fâcha.

—Rance! ce lard-là! Pauvre andouille! Le cochon qui a donné cela était aussi honnête homme que toi et moi! Perds donc voire un peu l'habitude de parler des gens que tu ne connais pas!

Mais Chassagne avait son idée:

—Tu m'avais parlé de me faire manger du "côtis" frais! ... Tu ne tues donc pas ton cochon? ...

—Il y a un beau temps qu'il est tué! ... Il me mangeait les yeux de la tête. Et enfin, depuis le temps que cette pauvre bête attendait! ...

Là-dessus, Griffotte parla de se remettre en chantier:

—Il faut bien que nous "loïons" un peu! ...

On recommença donc de "loïer." Et Chassagne recommença de geindre: "Ah! faisait-il, le soleil penche fort: ce sevait t'y pas temps de boire un coup? ..." Bientôt même, il songea à finir la journée: "Voilà le soleil qui parle de se coucher! ..."

—Laisse-le causer tout seul, Chassagne! Car lui, pardi! il se couche dans les rochers; tandis que toi tu vas te coucher dans un bon lit de plumes: ça fait une fichue différence, ça! ...

Il était tard et en nuit quand on rentra à Saint-Philibert. Chassagne tombait de fatigue. L'idée d'un bon souper le soutenait. Mais, en fait de bon dîner, il n'y eut que la potée.

—Ah! expliqua la Marie, j'aurais voulu faire un lapin. Tu sais, Griffotte, ce gros lapin roux qui est si fier d'avoir tant de poils! Mais voilà que quand j'ai été le chercher il s'est mis si fort en colère, et il a tant tapé des pieds, que je n'ai pas osé le contrarier. Il y avait bien aussi la grosse mère lapine, qui est une forte bête. Mais quand elle a senti s'approcher la fête, elle s'est mise à se rationner; et maintenant il nous faut la reengraisser! ...

Pendant qu'on mangeait, la Marie s'avisait: "Ah! si je savais ... je ferais une salade!" Mais comme elle ne savait pas, elle n'en fit pas. Chassagne, lui, cherchait à piquer le lard dans le pot: "Ah! mon Dieu donc! fit soudain la Marie, voilà que j'ai oublié le lard!"

Griffotte la consola gaillardement:

—Ça ne fait rien! ... Car, vois-tu, Chassagne! ... c'est presque fou de vouloir associer, dans le même pot, des beaux haricots comme ceux-ci avec le lard d'un abruti de cochon! ... A ta santé, Chassagne! ... D'aucuns de tes gens à vins de Gevrey lui trouveraient des airs de piquette. Mais moi, je dis: j'aime un brin de verdure dans le vin, et je suis friand d'y sentir une jeunesse!

Cependant, comme Chassagne parlait de repartir le lendemain matin, Griffotte se fâcha:

—Il y a encore du blé à lier, sapristi! ... Et demain encore c'est jour de fête! ...



# The Other Man's Review

By George Jean Nathan

## I

**THE THEATER MIND.**—The person who takes his mind with him into a theater is kin to the person who takes his mind with him into a ballroom. The theater is, above everything else, a pleasure temple: the mind has no place in it. A person may find pleasure in beautiful poetry, rich music, lovely colours, robust humour, happy wit, pretty women, ringing drama—in any or all of the finer things that a theater has to offer; but surely none of these things calls upon the mind. For those things in the theater which call upon the mind—one had better say posture themselves to call upon the mind—such things, for example, as thesis drama, are not the best things of the theater, but the mongrel, half-caste, bastard things. They, and the things like them, are for the persons who have no minds to take with them to a theater, even if they would.

The theater mind, at its best, is a mind purged of every vestige of soberness and needle-fine discrimination, of studious reflection and sharp balance. It is a mind in a dinner jacket, with its hat at something of a tilt, and with six or seven anti-ethical cocktails chasing one another gaily in and out of its fibres, tissues and lobes. It is on an emotion and colour spree. It is on the boozy hunt for flashily painted dramatic lamp-posts that will support again its properly limp doubt in the nobility of humanity, the goodness of God, and the faithfulness of its best girl. Syllogisms? To hell with syllogisms! Logic? To hell with logic! Polemics? To hell with polemics! Bring on the soft and soothing poetry! Bring

on the horse-pistols! Bring on Falstaff! Bring on the women!

## II

**The Spectator and the Love Scene.**—On watching a love scene enacted upon the stage, it is necessary for the less ingenuous spectator mentally to engaud and beautify the actress heroine (where the spectator is a man) or the actor hero (where the spectator is a woman) if the spectator's emotionalization by the scene is to be insured. The spectator is not magnetized by such a scene unless the man or woman participating in it is the man or the woman whom the spectator would wish as his or her vis-à-vis in a similar actual scene. In four instances out of five, the actor playing the hero or the actress playing the heroine is not up to the palate of the spectator's heart: the spectator must half close the eyes of his or her imagination and dream into the actress' slippers a girl of his own fancy, or into the actor's boots her own personal taste in Don Juans and sweethearts.

## III

**The Cinema.**—The circumstance that the human voice is lacking from the motion picture is not quite the crushing fetch that the motion picture's critics believe. They cannot confound the artistic pretensions of the cinema with such an argument. Pantomime may aspire to authentic artistic heights. But the motion picture is not pantomime. It is, at best, semi-pantomime. It is pantomime interrupted at frequent intervals by the guide-posts, legends, sign-boards and proscenium placards



called, in the cinema argot, titles and inserts. It is no more pantomime than a street beggar with a card reading, "I am deaf and dumb; please help me," fastened to his thorax, is pantomime. It is, in a word, pantomime with a typographical Ed Wynn standing in the foot-light trough and telling the audience every other minute what it is all about.

## IV

*Technique and Charm.*—Perhaps not more often than once in every twenty years do we have the spectacle of an actress naturally without charm victoriously surmounting the deficiency by means of a finished technique. In the general run, the charming actress without much technical equipment is the theatrical superior of the negative actress amply equipped. So long as the theater lasts, an actress like Laurette Taylor, as rich in charming personality as she is poor in technical resource, will ever be a more effective actress than one like Margaret Anglin, who is as deficient in the personal quality as she is proficient in the technical. There are actresses like Sarah Bernhardt and Eleonora Duse who possess the two in combination: they are the accepted great actresses of their day. There are others like Ethel Barrymore and Gladys Cooper who possess a plenitude of the former quality and a moderate amount of the latter: they are the idolized actresses of their day. There are still others like Marietta Olly and Carlotta Nillson who possess only the latter—and they, most often, are the failures.

## V

*The Art of Dramatic Criticism, as Practised by the New York Times.*—

"The last act fairly swarms with children, and it would come ungraciously from a playgoer who sat through it with a lump in his throat not to bear witness to its genuine appeal. Perhaps, however, you are not moved when you see a score of kiddies marching two by two through the streets, with bobbing Sisters of Mercy acting as right guide and file closers. Perhaps it does not choke you up a little when, from some high-walled

school yard, you hear suddenly the shrill clamour of children at recess. . . . If it does not, 'Five O'Clock' would have no particular call upon your sympathies."

## VI

*The Art of Actor-Stroking, as Practised by the New York Times.*—

"... A little of the real flame is in Edward Robinson, too. You have only to see his performance as Satin ('Night Refuge') to realize it and to realize, too, how all-compensating is the real fire. Here is a young actor seemingly without an atom of what is feebly called 'personal distinction.' His speech (and Satin was supposed to be a man of education) is what dear Mrs. Sanders used to call 'barbarous.' He takes the key-note speech of the play, where Satin cries out: 'What is truth? Human beings—that's the truth,' and devastates it by saying, 'Youman beans.' Yet . . . he is still worth his weight in gold!"

## VII

*Résumé.*—A good theater should be like the library of an amiable and cultivated man: it should possess all the virtues of such a library, and all the pleasant little vices. It should not be devoted largely to the classics: a library composed largely of the classics is the mark of the nouveau or the dusty-head. It should display what is best in the old, for that is always fresh; it should display what is best of the new, for that is always arresting; it should contain also the agreeable unimportant trifles that go to chase away thought and soberness with loud, low chuckles. It should be a theater, like the library, upon whose shelves stand in juxtaposition reflection and belly laughter, poetry and gay, low fig-stuff, wit and the torpedo bat, imagination, honest sentiment, searching comment, and fair and lovely frontispieces. It would show upon its shelves in close proximity Aristophanes and "Anatol," Bahr and Bickel, Corneille and Irene Castle, Donnay and Max Dearly, Eche-garay and "Erdgeist," Feydeau and the "Follies," Goethe and Lady Gregory, Hauptmann and Raymond Hitchcock, Ibsen and "The Importance of Being Earnest," "Justice" and Justine John-



ston, "Königskinder" and "The King," Lemaître and "Le Veau d'Or," Molière and Kathleen Martyn, "Narrentanz" and "No, but I got a sister Lena," "Othello" and "Oh, Boy," the "Play-boy of the Western World" and "Pour Avoir Adrienne," Quedenfeld and the "Queen of the Moulin Rouge," Rostand and Rip, Shakespeare and Sam Scribner's Burlesquers, Thoma and "The Tyranny of Tears," "Und Pippa Tanzt" and "Unges Forbund," Vollmöller and Verneuil, Wedekind and the "Wife Without a Smile," Yeats and "Youth," Zola and Zamacois. It should, like his library, take the man's culture for granted. It should interest, divert and amuse, not educate. It should, with its fond rememorations and reflections, be as an old trunk in the attic of his mind or, with its lively beauties and humours, as a sudden cocktail.

## VIII

*The Theatrical Manager and the Immigrant.*—The immigrant, as I used to see it, was one upon whom the American theatrical manager laid the blame for his own deficiencies. Was the grade of American theatrical entertainment becoming lower with each successive year? Then the blame was August Kraus', who had come over in the steerage from Bunzlau, Leonid Przkwzi's, who had come over as a stokers' chambermaid from Novograd Volynsk, and Giacomo Spumentì's, who hailed from Boscotrecasi. Well, there may have been something in it: I am not sure. Yet the fact remains that when the war put an end to immigration the quality of American dramatic fare materially improved. Again, perhaps immigration has nothing to do with the case: personally, I believe that it has utterly nothing to do with it. Perhaps the Messrs. Kraus, Przkwzi and Spumentì, become moderately opulent from their divers trades, are themselves responsible for the happy change. Perhaps now that the ban on immigration is again lifted and the immigrants are again vouchsafed a sufficient period to

fatten off the delicatessen, pants-pressing and shoe-shining arts, the finer American theater will prosper three and four-fold.

## IX

*Comedy and Tragedy.*—The writing of comedy calls for a higher experience, education and culture than the writing of tragedy. Comedy is the flower of sophistication, introspection, philosophy and disillusion; tragedy more often the sudden weed, however arresting, of emotionalism, sentimentality and metaphysical amaurosis. There are always, at all times, such exceptions as Shakespeare. Yet where, on the planes far below, a third-rate man may write an impressive tragedy like "The Marquis de Priola," one will never find but a first-rate man writing a searching comedy like "Anatol." It has so happened that the writer of great tragedy and fine comedy has at times been one and the same physiological unit. But it has never even then, for all the outward look of the fellow, been the same man.

## X

*The Moving Pictures and the Theater.*—Still come facts of the technique of the motion picture industry's invasion of the legitimate stage. A motion picture impresario has a new mistress. The girl wants to get into the moving pictures, but the impresario can do little for her unless she has some sort of name: the girl flatly declines to play small parts: she wants one of the leading parts or nothing: her man must gratify her whim or lose her. The impresario buys the manuscript of a play—any hack play lying around will do. He produces it for \$10,000 with his girl in the leading rôle. He puts it on out of town and then buys a six weeks' lease of a New York theater from one of the managers by outbidding a legitimate producer beyond the latter's means. If the legitimate producer is able to pay only the regular rental of the theater, say \$4,000, the movie gentleman bids



\$4,500 and gets the lease. The play, with the girl in it, opens. The movie gent has paid out \$10,000 on the production, and \$27,000 for the six weeks' rental of the theater, or a total of \$37,000. The play, let us say, is not much of a success: it plays, with the help of the cut-rate ticket agents, to a gross of only \$6,000 on the week, or a total for the six weeks of \$36,000. Ha, ha! you say, the movie gent has lost money—\$1,000 to be exact, and it serves him right! But you are wrong. He has, for a mere \$1,000, made a name for his girl—at least enough of a name to "go" in the movies; he has identified her with the play; he has made a movie name for the play, for which—had he bought it from another producer—he would have had to pay all the way from \$15,000 to \$40,000; and he is now able to slip over his sweet one upon the movie patrons as an actress of high talent and Broadway renown. And, meanwhile, unable to get the New York theater, some such producer as Arthur Hopkins is forced, at the loss of the comparatively little capital he has, temporarily to lay off in Red Bank, New Jersey, a company of respectable actors in a respectable play.

I am again ringing in false alarms, you say? There have already, within the last three months, been four such cases. Five more are in the offing. And the new season hasn't dawned.

### XI

*The Touch of Mica.*—Even the greatest dramatist must always have in him something of the plebeian. It may be a faint streak, indiscernible to the penetrating eye, but it is within him nevertheless. No thoroughbred aristocrat, wholly free of democratic taint, can write real drama. Drama is the stubborn, automatic echo in an artist's heart of the voice of the people from whom he has sprung.

### XII

*The Art Theater.*—The so-called Art Theater, wherever it springs up, is gen-

erally a bore, and for a simple reason. The impresarios always fall into the error of believing that art is something formidable, austere, and having the imprimatur of what passes for cultured recognition. Art is often nothing of the sort: it is just as often gay as dour, just as often frothy as founded in stone, just as often to be found up the side streets of appreciation as upon the highly-lighted highway. The "Choëphori" of Æschylus is not more Art than the "General John Regan" of George Birmingham. And if Tolstoi's "Power of Darkness" is Art, then so, as well, is Schnitzler's "Reigen." There is just as much place in an authentic Art Theater for Harold Brighouse's "Hobson's Choice" as for Ibsen's "Rosmersholm" or Björnsterne Björnson's "Sigurd Slembe."

### XIII

*Critic and Creation.*—It is not a sound argument to contend against the critic who has himself never done other creative work that he is, because of this, a weak vessel with a hole in his bottom. A man may be at once an excellent critic of the arts and a nonentity in the creation of one of them. Yet though this may be true, the records of fact fail to disclose a single first-rate critic who was himself not more or less authentically proficient in other creative enterprise.

### XIV

*Farce.*—Of all the forms of playwriting, farce is the most often underestimated. Yet of all the forms it is perhaps the most difficult of successful execution. The very word *farce* is a dangerous prefatory challenge: it is to the playwriting form which it stands for what the preface, "Here's a funny story," is to the narration of an anecdote. Tell a man that you are about to make him jump, shoot off a pistol behind him and, for all your disarming introduction, he *will* jump. That is the way with melodrama. Tell a man that



you are about to move him emotionally, have the musicians play the last movement of Brahms' third symphony and, for all your disarming introduction, he *will* be moved. That is the way with drama. But tell a man that you are about to make him laugh and, for all the juiciness of your wheeze, your prefatory challenge will have more or less straightened out his face against you. That is the way with farce. . . . This is why I hold de Caillavet and de Flers artists superior to every contemporary French dramatist save Rostand and de Curel—and in a few isolated instances, Hervieu—and why I regard Margaret Mayo's "Baby Mine" a finer performance in dramatic composition than the best propaganda melodrama that Brioux has ever written or the best emotional drama that has ever been manufactured by the Times Square Brioux, Augustus Thomas.

## XV

*The Superior English.*—The English compose the only modern race whose degree of civilization is sufficiently high to permit it to enjoy a good laugh at its own expense in the dramatic theater. The Frenchman insists that he be theatrically pictured to himself as a noble patriot: any other picture, save it be of himself as an irresistible *chevalier aux dames*, is unwelcome to him. The German does not mind a satirical picture of himself, but the satire must be obvious, must be laid on heavily with a broom, or he will not stomach it. To picture an Irishman or a Jew save as a creature of all the virtues, or an American save as a world conqueror, is to bring cobwebs to the window of the box-office. The Englishman alone relishes a devastating X-ray of himself. Or, if he does not relish it, alone amiably tolerates it.

## XVI

*Mr. Clayton Hamilton and His Hat.*—Three selections from the dramatic criticism of Clayton Hamilton, in *Vogue*:

## I

"'Adam and Eva' is both skilfully constructed and wittily written. Good workmanship is rare in these shoddy and neglectful days; and hats should evermore be doffed in honour of good workmen."

## II

"It is, of course, impossible to determine whether or not Harry Beresford could give an equally capable performance of a totally different character; but in this particular part ('Boys Will Be Boys,' by Irvin S. Cobb) he reaches greatness; and whenever greatness is achieved, all lovers of the arts should rise to their feet and stand reverently, hats off, with uncovered heads."

## III

"The Yiddish theater is more cultivated and more cultured than the American; and this achievement has been registered by a group of people who have been resident among us for only a quarter of a century. If we choose to regard these people as foreigners, we are condemned to take our hats off to them. But to remove the hat is a salutary exercise; for it reminds us to respect the grand old name of gentleman."

## XVII

*On the Criticism of Drama and Acting.*—Convincingly to criticize drama, one must have a wide knowledge and sharp understanding of drama, to say nothing of a sound point of view. But convincingly to criticize acting, one need have only opinions: it matters not whether these opinions are predicated upon experience, nor whether they are intrinsically sound or unsound. For where the standards whereby drama is criticized have been clocked off more or less precisely, where drama responds to a more or less exact, impersonal criticism, the standards whereby acting is criticized have been, and remain, at bottom little else than the variable standards of personal reaction and prejudice. One can, to a degree, outline clearly the precepts of dramatic criticism, but the criticism of acting has no precepts, or at least no precepts save those that lie with entire obviousness upon the surface. No first-rate critic of drama has



ever been considered a first-rate critic of acting. No accepted critic of acting has ever been considered even a tenth-rate critic of drama. The critic of drama, at his best, is always something of a dignified craftsman. The critic of acting, at his best, is usually something of a dignified ass.

### XVIII

*Intelligence and the Dramatist.*—The quality least valuable to a dramatist is intelligence. It is no more necessary for a first-rate dramatist to be of a highly developed intelligence than it is for a first-rate painter, sculptor or composer. He must, like these others, of course know thoroughly the essentials of his craft; he must, like these others, of course have imagination, technical dexterity, and high personal resource. But he may otherwise be a blockhead. This is singularly true in the case of dramatic writing. A dramatist may be a dramatist of the first flavour and yet be, by the accepted standards, an uneducated man. He may not know the first thing of philosophy, æsthetics, literature, painting, music, history, ethics, economics—the first thing of any of these or of any of the other fundamentals of sound training—and yet write beautiful, moving plays. If George Bernard Shaw is not a really great dramatist, it is his intelligence alone that has kept him from being one. If Gerhart Hauptmann is a really great dramatist, it is his simplicity of mind, his confined education, that has made him one. Education and training are the check-reins clearly discernible in the dramatic writings of such men as Moore and Chesterton: less intelligent men, their plays would lose a measure of the dismantling reserve, the corseted air, which they currently contain and reveal.

The writing of emotion provoking drama calls for a peculiar kind of courage, and this peculiar kind of courage a highly educated man lacks. The man so educated has had much of his natural and original emotionalism, gaudery, venturesomeness and *amour*

*propre* boiled out of him; and these are the very qualities that are valuable to the dramatist. The great dramatist is often the one who retains a full confidence in false hopes, and dreams, and illusions: who sees the world through a rainbow, and who muses on gorgeous and compelling, if bogus, fancies. The worst dramatist is often the one whose eyes, for all his dissuading prayers, relentlessly penetrate the shams of love and the pretty mirages of faith. Only an intelligent man can write fine satire; only one whose mind is still somewhat perfumed with the falsities of life, fine drama of another sort. Humour, the first attribute of profound culture, would have restrained the hand that wrote the fine drama called "The Weavers." And, by the same mark, the humour that wrote the fine drama called "Cæsar and Cleopatra" has restrained the same hand from exercising a proper dramatic power in the serious emotional scenes that it has occasionally, if but for a few moments, essayed.

### XIX

*The Polish Drama.*—Of all modern national drama, that of the Poles is the worst. There is little in it, from first to last, that equals even the third-grade British or American, which would seem to touch bottom. Jerzy Zulawski, perhaps the most conspicuous practising dramatist of present-day Poland, is little more than a talented George V. Hobart.

### XX

*Journalistic Dramatic Criticism.*—The argument that journalistic dramatic criticism is necessarily of too hurried a nature, that it lacks the deliberation to make it duly sober and valuable, impresses me as so much nonsense. A newspaper reviewer has at least an hour in which briefly to set down his criticism of a play: he rarely writes more than half a column, or approximately five hundred words: he generally has at least twenty minutes or half an hour



for free deliberation—to say nothing of all the time that he is in the theater—before he takes his pen and paper in hand. Surely there is here no herculean task. Surely any intelligent man who knows his craft can write half a column of intelligent analysis in an hour, after he has pondered his subject during the two hours that he has sat before it and during the half hour that it has taken him to get from the theater to his writing table. Surely the average play which he sees imposes no strain upon his sagacities. And if the play is above the average, if it is the work of a first-rate, or of even a second-rate, author, he has been able to study it in advance from the printed page, since the majority of the more important plays are printed and published in advance of theatrical revelation.

The weakness of journalistic dramatic criticism lies in another direction. Journalistic dramatic criticism in America, save in three or four instances, is not too hurried and too lacking in deliberation to make it sound: it is too little hurried and too little lacking in deliberation to make it sound. Or at least, approximately sound. The majority of men who write this criticism are ex-reporters accustomed to quick decisions, quick judgments, quick analyses, quick transcriptions and recordings. As reporters, they are still alert, sensitive men. And, as reporters, they are handicapped and hamstrung by the comparative leisure which their new work vouchsafes them. They are not used to calm and deliberation; they are used to hurry, to snapshot thinking, to literal, hair-trigger commentary. And, given time for meditative loafing, they are lost, as a circus bareback rider is lost on the bridle path. They are given time for analysis and ratiocination, and they think it their duty to analyze and deduce. In a word, to turn professor, doctor. The sensation, to them, is a peculiar one. And the results, to us, are even more peculiar.

## XXI

*On Bickel.*—Perusing once more the comedic gifts of M. George Bickel in "The Scandals of 1920," one continues one's wonderment at the persistent managerial suppression of what is perhaps as high a talent for low comedy as our American music show stage has known. The fellow is a born buffoon if ever there was one, yet he is still to be vouchsafed the opportunity to prove himself. That given this opportunity he would soon take his place at the head of all the native revue comiques, few who recall his memorable antics in the "Bowery Burlesquers" in the early '90s, or his celebrated fiddle-tuning act in the "Follies" of seven or eight years ago, or his few moments of chin-whisker dialect in the Winter Garden show, "Broadway to Paris," will disbelieve. Yet this rare talent—a talent for vulgar fun that the thrice famed George Robey has never, at his very best, even remotely matched—is regularly shunted into the background and supplanted with vaudeville clowns who, in the art of low comedy, are as Bickel's children.

Give back to this Bickel his old Hofbräu make-up and his matchless garbled English, and watch him come into his own! Ethel Barrymore has said that he can do more with a perk of the head and a wiggle of the forefinger than any other *cabotin* she has ever laid an eye on. Florenz Ziegfeld pronounces his fiddle-tuning act one of the few genuine comic masterpieces of the music show stage. George Creel sadly wipes away a tear when he recalls that the days of Bickel and "On the Yukon"—the days of the funniest band that ever tooted an audience half deaf—are, alas, no more. And the late William Dean Howells maintained that Bickel's periodic staccato flip of the foot contained as great an amount of laughter as an entire Forepaugh circus. Bickel, in good truth, is a mine of unlaughed laughs. Who will uncork him?





# Books More or Less Amusing

By H. L. Mencken

A NEW novel by Joseph Conrad naturally takes precedence of all the gaudy fiction of lesser hands, as a new tone-poem by Richard Strauss takes precedence of all the bold, ear-bumping experiments of the Strawinskys, the Schoenbergs and the Elgars. It is amazing, indeed, how the melancholy and sinister Pole holds his high and lonesome place. There is not only no living novelist in active practise who challenges him; there is not even one who respectably follows him. One matches novelist against novelist, putting this one first for style, and that one first for heft and beam, and t'other one first for something else—until one comes to Conrad. Then the contest is suddenly over; there remains only Saladin, austere, remote, unapproachable. Whenever I re-read "Lord Jim," or "Typhoon," or "Heart of Darkness," or "Youth," or even "Victory," I get the feeling that I am venturing into a foreign and almost transcendental literature. There is nothing else on paper that is quite like these books, at least to me. Reading them belongs to a special and quite indescribable order of experience. Fabricated out of the immemorial materials of romance, and even out of the dingiest shoddy of romance, they yet lift themselves mysteriously into a new sphere, where everything is at once curiously eerie and superlatively real. One gets out of them that benign escape from life which is the aim and high utility of every work of the imagination, but one also gets out of them a sense of being infinitely close to life, of penetrating to its fundamental phenomena, of seeing it reduced to its stark and tragic elements.

The thing steals on one like the sound of distant music, faint, insinuating, strangely touching. And at the end the spell fades away like Lord Jim himself, "inscrutable at heart and excessively romantic."

The new Conrad, by name "The Rescue" (*Doubleday*), goes back to the scenes of "Almayer's Folly" and "An Outcast of the Islands," and the central character is an old friend, Captain Thomas Lingard, of the brig *Lightning*—King Tom, the Rajah Laut, rump viceroy of all the hidden river mouths and dark lagoons along the Shore of Refuge. But the time is thrown back a bit; the Tom that we meet is still young and full of grandiose dreams; the era, I should say, is the fifties of the last century. The materials of the tale, as usual, are those of the commonest department-store fiction: Conrad seems to take a craftsman's delight in fashioning his towering and glittering cathedrals of romance out of the homely stone of tavern and butcher-shop. There are castaways on a wrecked yacht; there is a fugitive princess; there is a clash of rival dynasties; there is a love story that ends with renunciation and parting; there is even as if to fling a last challenge at the Chamberseys and Oppenheims, a brief glimpse of a German spy. It is King Tom himself who is the Romeo of the sad and abbreviated amour. When the schooner-yacht *Hermit* goes aground at the mouth of his private river, and so threatens to bring disaster to his complex and unfathomable intrigue in favor of the Rajah Hassim and the lovely Princess Immada, his first impulse is to make away with the obstacle at any



cost to the feelings, and even to the hide of the owner, Mr. Travers. But presently it turns out that there is a Mrs. Travers aboard, and thereafter the affair of King Tom is still more complex than it was before, and in the end it goes to pieces, and both the Rajah and the Princess depart for their Moslem Paradise, and Tom himself sails into the blue distance with a strange tugging at his heart. The thing never gets much beyond inflammatory whispers in the dark—that is, the love affair between Tom and Mrs. Travers. There is, to be sure, one colossal embrace, a hug that almost rises to manslaughter, but that is all. The Rajah and the Princess dead and the yacht pulled off into deep water, Tom returns to the *Lightning* and orders Carter, his mate, to make sail. "How was the yacht heading when you lost sight of her?" he asks. "South as near as possible," answers Carter. "Steer north," says King Tom.

The old, old stuff. "The Prisoner of Zenda" with improvements borrowed from the serials in the train-boy magazines. But with what a difference—in method, in manner, in mode of approach! How the objective melodrama turns into subjective struggle, and the improbable puts on probability! How tremendously vivid the characters are after a few pages—Lingard and his incomprehensible dreams of empire, his fantastic chivalry, his clairvoyant understanding of the Malay mind; Mrs. Travers and her swift yielding to the spell of the man, her eternal femaleness, her instinctive fathoming of his obscure and half-nebulous purposes; even Travers himself, the traditional Englishman of American farce, with his preposterous Dundrearies, his dogged reduction of all phenomena to formulæ, his almost incredible incapacity for seeing what is directly before his eyes! So with the minor personages of the tale—Carter, the inspired ass, half counter-jumper and half Drake; Captain H. C. Jörgenson, with his savage misanthropy, his infinite disillusion; the Rajah Hassim and his

faithful sister; d'Alcacer, the Spaniard; Jaffir, the wraith of the forests; old Belarab, and his spooky politics and theology. There is not a false note. The chronicle moves and breathes. The background is extraordinarily brilliant. The drama never falters for an instant. It is story-telling by a master of the art—simple, superbly designed and infinitely persuasive. I can think of no other novelist, far or near, who could have done it as Conrad has done it, or even, for that matter, imagined it. It belongs to the peculiarly Conradian order of romance.

But not to the top row, not to the class of "Almayer's Folly" and "Lord Jim." One discerns in it, now and then, a touch of weariness—a sign that the author is trying to recapture, bravely but half futilely, the splendor of a vanishing mood. It must be thirty years now since Conrad last sailed those far-flung and mysterious seas and had his face-to-face traffic with the people of his books. He remembers them, of course—but not as clearly as he once remembered them. It is as if he contemplated them through a gathering mist; now and then he must strain his eyes to see them at all. I daresay the war helped to fade those old memories. Into the consciousness of the man it flung a host of new memories, scarlet and challenging, and they drove out what was before them. Whatever the cause, "The Rescue" shows, on occasion, a certain effort that is surely not in any of the early island books. It tends to be cerebral when it should be merely pictorial; emotion is sometimes pumped up. . . . But let us not assault the lily with microscopes, cultures and Widal reactions. The thing, as it stands, is good enough. No other living novelist could have written it. No other novel of the current boiling is fit to be mentioned in the same breath with it.

## II

It is a long while since I last reviewed novels in this great repository of liter-



ary and fashionable intelligence, and so I have accumulated a lot of somewhat stale news about them. Boiled down, it amounts to this: that, next to "The Rescue," I commend the following works to the attention of the nobility and gentry:

"Maureen," by Patrick MacGill (*McBride*).

"This Side of Paradise," by F. Scott Fitzgerald (*Scribner*).

"Canaan," by Graça Aranha (*Four Seas*).

"When the King Loses His Head," by Leonid Andreyev (*International*).

"Responsibility," by James E. Agate (*Dorran*).

"The Romantic Woman," by Mary Borden (*Knopf*).

"My Neighbours," by Caradoc Evans (*Harcourt*).

"Tatterdemalion," by John Galsworthy (*Scribner*).

"The Secret Battle," by A. P. Herbert (*Knopf*).

"Limbo," by Aldous Huxley (*Chatto*).

I daresay there are others just as meritorious, or even, perhaps, far more meritorious. I simply make selections within the range of my own exploration. The order in which the titles are given is by no means an order of relative virtue. As a matter of fact, it seems to me that one story in the Huxley volume, by name "Happily Ever After," is the best thing in fiction, barring the Conrad book, that I have read in six months. It is, indeed, an almost perfect piece of work—superbly designed and beautifully executed—really first-rate irony. The rest of Huxley I like less, but in the worst of him there is always the mark of a genuinely competent artist. He is one of the young Englishmen who will be heard of long after many of the present heroes of the blurb writers are forgotten. He writes sound and colorful English, he has unusual ideas, and his work is full of a charming personality.

The best American novel that I have seen of late is also the product of a neophyte, to wit, F. Scott Fitzgerald. This Fitzgerald has taken part in THE SMART SET's display of literary fireworks more than once, and so you are probably familiar with his method. In

"This Side of Paradise" he offers a truly amazing first novel—original in structure, extremely sophisticated in manner, and adorned with a brilliancy that is as rare in American writing as honesty is in American statecraft. The young American novelist usually reveals himself as a naïve, sentimental and somewhat disgusting ignoramus—a believer in Great Causes, a snuffler and eye-roller, a spouter of stale philosophies out of Kensington drawing-rooms, the doggeries of French hack-drivers, and the lower floor of the Munich Hofbräuhaus. Nine times out of ten one finds him shocked by the discovery that women are not the complete angels that they pretend to be, and full of the theory that all of the miners in West Virginia would become instantly non-luetic, intelligent and happy if Congress would only pass half a dozen simple laws. In brief, a fellow viewing human existence through a knot-hole in the floor of a Socialist local. Fitzgerald is nothing of the sort. On the contrary, he is a highly civilized and rather waggish fellow—a youngster not without sentiment, and one even cursed with a touch or two of pretty sentimentality, but still one who is many cuts above the general of the land. More, an artist—an apt and delicate weaver of words, a clever hand, a sound workman. The first half of the story is far better than the second half. It is not that Fitzgerald's manner runs thin, but that his hero begins to elude him. What, after such a youth, is to be done with the fellow? The author's solution is anything but felicitous. He simply drops his Amory Blaine as Mark Twain dropped Huckleberry Finn, but for a less cogent reason. But down to and including the episode of the love affair with Rosalind the thing is capital, especially the first chapters. Not since Frank Norris's day has there been a more adept slapping in of preliminaries.

Of the other books mentioned I have got the most pleasure out of "Maureen," by Patrick MacGill, and "My Neighbours," by Caradoc Evans, the



former a tale of Irish peasant life in the precise manner of the same author's "Glenmornan," and the latter a collection of devastating sketches of the half-savage Welsh Methodists, with a preface on "The Welsh People" that is a truly appalling piece of irony. Evans, at times, is really almost unbearable. That such vermin as the Welsh should exist in Christendom is enough to make every man of enterprising mind seize a shot-gun and go out some dark night for a few pot shots. In them civilization reaches its lowest level and Christianity is reduced to an obscene absurdity. But let us speak a bit softly. On the one hand, it is not to be forgotten that the Right Hon. David Lloyd George is a Welshman of that class—and for all I know it may still be a violation of the Espionage Act to call him names, as it undoubtedly still is to question the divine inspiration of Woodrow. On the other hand, no American can read those tales of Robertses and Jenkinases and Joneses without gathering an uneasy sense that the change of a few place names would make them fit very disconcertingly into the American scene. Our small towns, in fact, are full of exactly the same sort of sanctified canaille that Evans describes. They are the bulwarks of the national Wesleyanism, the palladiums of the national crookedness and pecksniffery, the immovable upholders and exponents of Prohibition, 100% Americanism, right-thinking, forward-looking and all the other filthy contents of the national garbage can. I am constantly surprised that no American Evans arises to study and describe these sweet-smelling children of God. Masters lifted one corner of the tent in "The Spoon River Anthology" and Anderson lifted another corner in "Winesburg, Ohio," but both were diverted from the business by romanticism, both poetized the spectacle and so perfumed it. I have thrown out the suggestion before; I now renew it. Is this great and proud Republic incapable of producing an Evans?

## III

I RECOMMEND the Aranha book, not because it is the masterpiece that Guglielmo Ferrero in his introduction hints that it is, but because Latin-American literature is too little known north of the Rio Grande and it is pleasant to get a chance to study it. Hereafter that chance will be less rare and narrow, for Dr. Isaac Goldberg, the emperor of translators, has turned his attention to the subject, and pretty soon he will be rolling out volume after volume of the best work so far done in Brazil, the Argentine, Chile, Peru, Colombia and the smaller states. Since Jeremiah Curtin the world has seen no such translator as Dr. Goldberg. He apparently knows all the languages that have alphabets. He translates from the Yiddish, the Spanish, the English, the Portuguese, the German, the French and the Italian. More, he does it well, and makes intelligent selections. Yet more, his example seems to have stimulated other translators. Beside the Andreyev book already mentioned, the current crop includes "Short Stories From the Balkans," translated by Edna Worthley Underwood (*Jones*); "Short Stories From the Spanish," by Charles B. McMichael (*Boni*); Eduardo Zamacois' "Their Son" and "The Necklace" (*Boni*); Gabriele D'Annunzio's "Tales of My Native Town," by Prof. Dr. Rafael Mantellini (*Doubleday*), and Valery Brussop's "The Republic of the Southern Cross" (*McBride*), not to mention "Woman Triumphant," by the exploded prodigy, Blasco Ibañez (*Dutton*); "The Judgment of Peace," by Andreas Latzko, happily murdered by the Hungarian Bolsheviks (*Boni*), and "An Honest Thief," a new volume in the admirable series of translations of Fyodor Dostoevsky by Constance Garnett (*Macmillan*). This Dostoevsky series is worthy of very high compliment. The translations are idiomatic and readable, the books are decently printed and bound, and they are merchanted without any of the usual corn-doctor buncombe. . . . It is good to



see these translations. Nearly all Americans are monolingual. Without the aid of the Goldbergs they would walk in Egyptian ignorance of nine-tenths of the literature of the world. . . .

The other fiction that I have read is of smaller merit. Both "The Mask," by John Couros (*Doran*), and "The Swing of the Pendulum," by Adriana Spadoni (*Boni*), are worth reading, but neither holds up to the end. In "Dust of New York," by Konrad Bercovici (*Boni*), there is admirable work in detail, but the author tries to cover too much ground; one gets a smell of bravura. "Time and Eternity" and "Pink Roses," by Gilbert Cannan (*Doran*); "Mrs. Marden," by Robert Hichens (*Doran*); "Up and Down" and "David Blaize and the Blue Door," by E. F. Benson (*Doran*); "September," by Frank Swinnerton (*Doran*); "The Tall Villa," by Lucas Malet (*Doran*); "His Friend and His Wife," by Cosmo Hamilton (*Little-Brown*); and "Peter Jameson," by Gilbert Frankau (*Knopf*), are typical English novels of the sort so lavishly praised by American newspaper reviewers—workmanlike stuff, better than our own, but still essentially hollow. The best of these tales, if you insist upon reading any of them, is probably Swinnerton's; the worst is probably Frankau's. To his novel Hichens adds "Snake-Bite," a book of short stories (*Doran*), chiefly bad. Still worse are Gerald Cumberland's "Tales of a Cruel Country" (*Brentano*), though now and then there is a touch of genuine merit. In fact, some of the stories are very well done; it is the heroic badness of the bad ones that keeps the average low. Stephen McKenna's two books, "Sonia Married" and "Sheila Intervenes" (*Doran*), offer much better stuff. So does E. L. Grant Watson's "Deliverance" (*Knopf*), though the story is surely not to be put beside his Australian tales. So does Alfred Ollivant's "Two Men" (*Doubleday*), though here again you must not expect a second "Royal Road." W. Somerset Maugham's "The

Explorer" (*Doran*), is an early and very bad novel reprinted. It will offer a colossal disappointment to readers of "Human Bondage" and "The Moon and Sixpence." Several other very bad ones are in his trunk. No doubt we'll have them presently.

The native fiction, as usual, is chiefly garbage. Some of the very worst is in "The Best Short Stories of 1919," by Edward J. O'Brien (*Small-Maynard*), and "O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories, 1919," selected by a committee of the Society of Arts and Sciences (*Doubleday*). What this Society of Arts and Sciences may be I do not know—probably a *verein* of *alumina-dos* not yet tagged by the National Institute of Arts and Letters. It awards the O. Henry prize, very appropriately, to a machine-made piece of custard called "England to America," and fills out the rest of its volume with a fair story by Cabell and a dozen specimens of magazine trade goods. O'Brien is a bit more intelligent. He not only prints Cabell, but also Hergesheimer, Sherwood Anderson, Ellen N. LaMotte and Richard Matthews Hallett. His best story is "The Fat of the Land," by Anzia Yesierska. Both of these collections reveal the standards of the popular magazine editor. They are made to sell to the sort of folks who used to delight in O. Henry and Richard Harding Davis.

#### IV

LEAVING fiction, good and bad, one comes immediately into far pleasanter waters. I nominate some serious books that have either amused or instructed me during the past few months:

"Primitive Society," by Robert H. Lowie (*Boni*).

"Musical Portraits," by Paul Rosenfeld (*Harcourt*).

"French Literature of the Great War," by Albert Schinz (*Appleton*).

"The Last Thirty Days of Christ," by Sadakichi Hartmann (*Privately printed*).

"Psychoanalysis," by André Tridon (*Huebsch*).

"Psychology From the Standpoint of a Behaviorist," by John B. Watson (*Lippincott*).



"Goldoni and the Venice of His Time," by J. S. Kennard (*Macmillan*).

"Dark Water," by W. E. B. DuBois (*Harcourt*).

"Journeys and Experiences in Argentina, Paraguay and Chile," by Henry Stephens (*Knickerbocker*).

"Guide to Russian Literature," by Moissaye J. Olgin (*Harcourt*).

"Easy Lessons in Einstein," by Edwin E. Slosson (*Harcourt*).

"A Modern Book of Criticism," by Ludwig Lewisohn (*Boni*).

"Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland," by Lady Gregory (*Putnam*).

"Time Telling Through the Ages," by Harry C. Brearley (*Doubleday*).

"Letters of Travel," by Rudyard Kipling (*Doubleday*).

"Instigations," by Ezra Pound (*Boni*).

A pretty kettle, indeed! From the solemn æsthetic anathemas of Pound to the furious hymns of hate of DuBois; from Lady Gregory's discussion of immemorial superstitions to Slosson's gallant efforts to expound the latest scientific guesses! Yet, as I say, I have got capital diversion out of all of these books, and also no little edification. The most amusing of them, perhaps, is Stephens' volume of travel. Several years ago, in this place, I printed a highly eulogistic notice of his previous book, "South American Travels," and now he returns the compliment by dedicating his new work to me. But despite this somewhat embarrassing fact, I make bold to recommend it to all who enjoy an intimate and unhackneyed story of travel, without the slightest touch of pedantry or affectation. Stephens is no ordinary tourist, gaping idiotically from town to town, guide-book in hand. On the contrary, he has a fancy for remote and fantastic places, and he describes them, and the people he encounters in them, with all the disarming honesty of a little child. Is the town filthy, with dead cats piled in front of the cathedral? Then he sets it down. Is the local nabob a scoundrel, with the name of one who got his fortune by chicane? Then down it goes. Is the local beer gassy and flavorless? Then the fact is not overlooked. Obviously, this is the sort of travel-book that never bores for an instant. It records precisely the

things that one would remember one's self if one had made the journeys of the author; it is a journal so artlessly realistic that one never doubts it for an instant. Moreover, one gets out of it the notion that Stephens himself is an extremely interesting man—no dull fellow laboriously plodding the earth, but an enterprising and somewhat truculent adventurer, a connoisseur of strange and bizarre experiences, one disposed to poke into dark corners and to take curious chances. Whether or not his chronicle is chemically true I do not presume to decide. Now and then, in fact, I sniff a stretcher. But what are the odds? Didn't Marco Polo lie? And Captain John Smith? The important thing is that the story is always immensely entertaining, and that one gets out of it a coherent and even brilliant picture of the Latin-American empires. . . . It does not surprise me to note that this volume, like the previous one, is published by the author. Our American publishers, for all their enterprise otherwise, seem to have very poor noses for good books of travel. They print a great deal of flatulent stuff by wandering missionaries and college professors, dollar diplomats and literary ladies of fashion, but they missed the superb books of E. W. Howe and now they are missing the books of Stephens.

Pound's volume is a miscellany of the outlandish—chapters on baroque French poets, very advanced English novelists, and so on. There is even a burlesque treatise on the Book of Genesis. What illuminates the whole is the charm of Pound's unusual personality—his pertinacious bellicosity, his abysmal learning, his delight in the curious. He is perhaps the most extraordinary man that American literature has seen in our time, and, characteristically enough, he keeps as far away from America as possible. Hartmann is another exotic—half German and half Japanese by birth, but thoroughly American under it all—in fact, almost the typical æsthetic revolutionist of Greenwich Village. He prints his book



(a sort of variation on George Moore's "The Brook Kerith") privately, and announces that he'll be his own publisher hereafter. I wish I could give you his address in New York, but the law of the land forbids. This is no soap-box jest, but a sober fact. If I printed his address the Postoffice would rule that this whole article was an advertisement, and so the rate of postage on the magazine would be materially changed, and the cost to the publisher might run to several hundred dollars, not to mention a fine and maybe a month or two in jail. Such are the delights of life in a great moral republic, wherein every work of art is on the defensive *ipso facto* and must prove its right to exist. It is no wonder that Pound digs himself a trench on the far side of the ocean, and discharges his gas-bombs from its safe depths. What astonishes me is that Hartmann should come back to New York. His second or third book, I predict, will get him into jail. True enough, there is nothing evil in his compositions, but he takes literature too seriously. Imagine the horror of judge and jury when he answers at his trial, in answer to the sharp questioning of the patriotic district attorney, Mr. O'Googan, that he regards a sonnet as of more importance than a union suit.

Rosenfeld's "Musical Portraits" is full of prejudice. Against the later Richard Strauss, for example, he writes almost idiotically. But nevertheless it is a book worth reading, if only because it avoids the banal *Ayers' Almanac* style of the usual American music critic. The author loves and hates extravagantly, but he is never dull. The Tridon and Slosson books are efforts to make complex scientific concepts comprehensible to the general reader, and both show a great deal of pedagogic skill. Both include excellent bibliographies, and Tridon also adds a glossary. I may go back to them in some later article. And to Lewisohn's well-devised anthology of modern criticism, English, American, French and German—a very effective antidote to

the campus pump criticism that now rages. And, if the space ever offers, to Lowie's capital "Primitive Society" and to Watson's "Psychology," two revolutionary but extremely well-informed books. Neither shows the slightest sign of technical obscurity; reading them is as easy as reading a novel, and a thousand times as entertaining. Here, indeed, are two first-rate books . . . I wish I could say the same of "Time Telling Through the Ages," but a peculiarly sensitive artistic conscience holds me up. The book, in fact, is very blowsily and badly written; its interest lies in the subject, which is primarily the history of the Ingersoll watch. Well, why not a history of the Ingersoll watch? For one, I'd welcome an exhaustive one, giving every detail of the commercial tricks and cunninges whereby a decent time-piece was set before the great masses of the plain people at the small cost of one dollar. Such stories ought to be written. They are enormously more important and engrossing than the stories that ordinarily get between covers. Who wouldn't read, for example, a true biography of the late Post, author of Postum? Or of the Shuberts? Or of Tiffany's? Or of the Adams Express Company? Or of the man who conceived, designed and merchanted B. V. D.'s? Or of the De Long who invented the hook and eye? Or of Baccardi, the rum man? Or of Munyon? Or of Riker and Hegeman? Or of the Quigley chewing-gum magnates? Or of the author of Omega Oil? The Ingersolls, in the present case, had a good idea, but mauled it in the execution. They attempted to disarm criticism by drowning the story of their own great success in a sea of irrelevant details about the history of horology, by employing the wrong literatus to write it, and by messing up the product with a saccharine blurb by Dr. Frank Crane. The simple story of themselves alone, with all the justifiable boasting they could get into it, would be a valuable contribution to the history of American *Kultur*.



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